DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 249 158 SO 015 944

TITLE Playthings as Art Objects: Ideas and Resources. Kites and Sound Making Objects and Playing Cards and Dolls.

INSTITUTION City of Birmingham Polytechnic (England). Dept. of Art.

PUB DATE 83

NOTE 318p.; Developed by the Ethnographic Resources for Art Education Project. Production was supported by the Manpower Services Commission. Illustrations may not reproduce clearly.

PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom Use - Guides (For Teachers) (052)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC13 Plus Postage.

DESCRIPTORS *Art; Art Activities; Art Education; Art History; Cultural Background; Elementary Secondary Education; Folk Culture; *Foreign Culture; *Multicultural Education; *Play; *Toys

IDENTIFIERS *Dolls; *Kites

ABSTRACT

Five booklets focusing on playthings as art objects draw together information about historical, ethnographic, and play traditions of various cultures of the world. The first booklet provides an overview of ideas and resources about kites, sound making objects, playing cards, and dolls. The second booklet on kites discusses the distribution and origin of kites, Japanese, Korean, and Guatemalan kites, and the kites of Southeast Asia. A section relating kites to science is followed by songs about kites. The third booklet, sound-making objects, includes discussion of rattling objects, air objects, plucked objects, and beaten objects used by different cultures throughout the world. The focus of the fourth booklet is the origin of playing cards, with attention given to European playing cards, Tarot cards and fortune telling, and playing cards of the Mamluk Kingdom in Egypt, the Apache peoples of North America, and the peoples of East India. The final booklet focuses on the ethnographic origins of dolls, including the dolls of the Hopi people of North America, folk dolls of India, and Japanese dolls. Suggestions for classroom activities, sketches, and references are provided throughout. (LH)

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Playthings as Art Objects

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IDEAS AND RESOURCES

Kites [and] **Sound Making Objects** [and] **Playing Cards** [and] **Dolls**

SP 015 944

ETHNOGRAPHIC RESOURCES
FOR ART EDUCATION

Playthings as Art Objects

Ideas and Resources

The production of this pack has been supported by the Manpower Services Commission's Community Enterprise Programme and Birmingham Polytechnic.

ETHNOGRAPHIC RESOURCES FOR ART EDUCATION

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Birmingham, B3 3BX. 1983

CONTENTS

Introduction..... 1

Kites..... 4

Sound Making Objects..... 10

Playing Cards..... 16

Dolls..... 22

Index..... 28

The Pack

What

1. Kites
2. Sound Making Objects
3. Playing Cards
4. Dolls

The ethnographic description of playthings as art objects.

How and Why

5. Ideas and Resources

Educational implications, suggestions for classroom activities, and a master index.

We are grateful for the collaboration of Jennifer Davies, Alan Leary, and the staff and pupils of the following: Marsh Hill Secondary School, Smethwick Hall Boy's School, Welford Primary School.

Thanks are also due to the many other people, too numerous to list, who have helped with market research, advice and encouragement.

Introduction

This pack is about play as well as about play-things. Playing is what we do when we want to amuse ourselves, it is associated with happiness and relaxation. But play also serves a more serious purpose. It helps us to get to know things and situations that are unfamiliar. In both these senses it offers a particularly fruitful route for multi-cultural studies. Play can be a kind of safe experiment through which one discovers what it might be like to be someone else, like a doctor, or a teacher, or a magician. Or it might help one to understand how to behave in different societies - for instance, where it is customary to sit on the floor instead of on chairs. This is the pretend kind of play through which children learn to practise the customs of their community.

In the form of drama and ceremony, play allows adults to see situations and relationships heightened in a theatrical setting. Through such play we find a transition between the real world and the unknown. The Kachina Spirits, for example, play an important part in the life of the Hopi people of North America. In order to communicate with such insubstantial beings the Hopi give them shape and bodily form by impersonation in the form of costumed dancers and dolls. In its heightened,

dramatic form play, in many cultures, is a part of ceremonies which are associated not with this world, but with another world - of the spirit - which cannot be approached by any other means.

There was a time when each symbolic part of a ceremony was new. When, for example, the first Japanese woman gave a certain doll to her daughter on the occasion of the first 'Girl's Festival' after her birth. It has become customary for the girl to collect dolls given to her by relatives throughout her life and to display them at each festival. With constant renewal of a custom by many generations the original object becomes a symbol in a ritual. Often its patterning or form has survived far beyond the memory of the events which gave rise to it. For example, the Apache tribe in North America copied traditional Spanish design playing cards, even though they did not know that the swords and cups depicted on them were meant to represent the church and the military.

Sometimes the possibilities of the environment are discovered in playful activity. The instruments in the pack provide examples where the qualities of natural materials are put to direct use, as in the rattles and drums. In Africa, for instance, a

musician may not merely attempt to imitate natural sounds by making sounding objects, but often reverses the process by taking natural sounds and incorporating them into the music. Music is clearly an important part of life throughout Africa. Games played by children are often a form of musical training which prepares them to participate in all areas of adult life - fishing, hunting, farming, attending funerals and even fleeing from wild animals. Combined with rhythmic clapping, stamping and dance movements the instruments may be used to express communal acts of celebration or other rituals through which immaterial forces are propitiated.

In the case of some of the ancient and traditional objects in the pack it is not possible to be sure whether they were or are playthings. Were they for pleasure, or instruction, or for work as in the fishing kites of the Pacific? Or were they ritual objects with deeper meaning? The thread which holds together the kites, the dolls, the cards and the sound-making objects is the human imagination discovering new possibilities through play. It is this process of imaginative construction which allows us to present playthings as art objects in the context of art and craft education. In the act of making something every artist plays with materials in order to explore their qualities, and plays with ideas before they find new form in a chosen medium.

Because playthings so often have their origins as ritual objects we have been sensitive to the difficulties of interpreting their meaning. A person whose perceptions are permeated with European thought cannot stand in the shoes of a villager from a completely different culture. Accounts by western anthropologists of the customs and beliefs of such villagers must often be regarded as provisional. The very fact of attempting to make explicit what has been in its home setting implicit and unquestioned for generations, must change the nature of understanding.

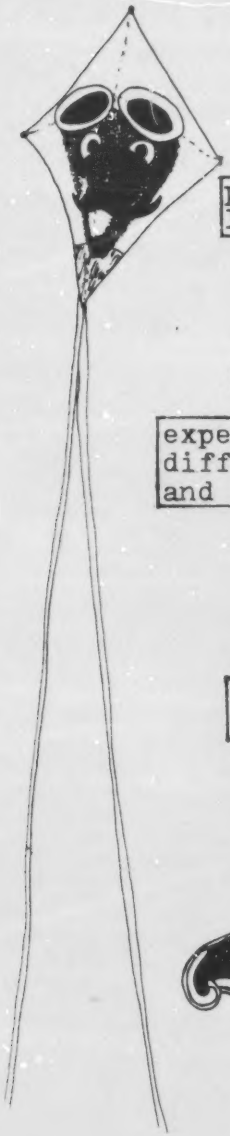
For these reasons the things shown in the books were mainly chosen because of their artistic and functional qualities, and because the researchers were personally interested in them. There is no other significance in the selection. Indeed we hope that this freedom will encourage others to allow their interest similar rein, and that this may result in future additions to the pack.

We hope that these materials, like play itself, provide a safe and enjoyable route for exploration. We hope they will alert readers to the richness of the diverse ways of life, and that in using the objects as stimuli for art and craft activities they will be able to invest them with personal meaning.

This 'Ideas and Resources' book suggests some techniques which have already been found useful in classrooms. The four specific texts give information about the ethnographic background of each group of objects. They can be approached from any starting point. As in all art, new insights can be created by the fusion of information, imagination and skill. We hope 'Playthings' will help to span the distance of space, time and custom which separates their makers and users.

Helga Loeb.
Phil Slight.
Nick Stanley.

Birmingham 1983



Make a Kite? — Why? What for?

What materials?

paper, plastic sheets, light material, mylar...

Shapes?

experiment with different shapes and forms.....

Decoration?

prints, crayons, sprays, collage...

Design?

design a school, class, group, family, or team kite - or your own individual kite...

KITES

Flying sessions.

- school outing ?

A "Kite Week."

Competitions.

highest flying kite...

longest flying kites...

fighting kites...

Kites for display.

Kite stories & songs.

- write your own...

Giant Kites.

Join a kite club.

- can't find one ?

START YOUR OWN!!!

HOW KITES FLY

Kites are heavier-than-air crafts and would fall to the ground if it wasn't for the force of the wind. They fly because they have flat surfaces which, when inclined at an angle in the sky, are lifted by this force, Aeroplane wings, sails and bird wings all work in the same way as a kite.

Three important forces combine together to regulate the behaviour of a kite:-

1. The upward thrust, or lift.

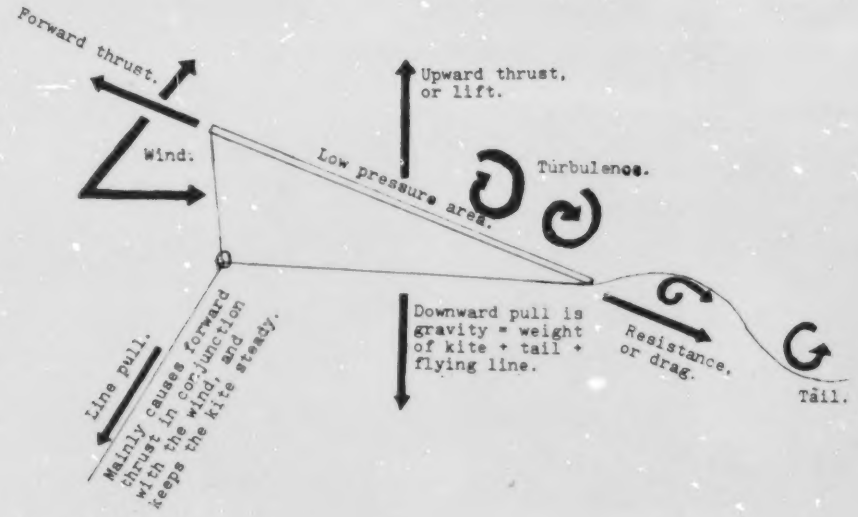
   The flow of air around the kite creates a partial vacuum above and behind the kite so that it tends to rise.

2. Forward thrust, or propulsion.

   The tension on the line below and in front of the kite converts the resistance of the kite into forward thrust.

3. Drag, or resistance.

   A tail is added to the kite which adds weight, generates friction with the moving air and turbulence in the airstream, and combines with gravity to hold the kite steady.


Forward thrust.
Wind.
Upward thrust, or lift.
Low pressure area.
Turbulence.
Line pull.
Mainly causes forward thrust in conjunction with the wind, and keeps the kite steady.
Downward pull is gravity = weight of kite + tail + flying line.
Resistance, or drag.
Tail.

Line pull is a driving force.
A taut line transmits power.

DO NOT FLY KITES NEAR RAILWAYS, OVERHEAD POWER CABLES, AIRPORTS OR DURING ELECTRICAL STORMS.

Two-Stick Kite

The best-known kite and one of the easiest to build. It is inherently unstable and therefore always needs a tail. For this same reason it is important to be accurate with measurements.

Materials

8mm dowel x 210cm.
Framing string.
Macrame No.5 x 1.5m.
Paper.
Electrical tape.
Flying line & spool.
Key ring.

Directions

1. Slot spar and spine ends 1cm and bind with tape to prevent splitting.
2. Tie spar and spine together 24cm from the top.
3. Attach framing string by slipping it through the slots at the ends of the spar and spine.
4. Lay this frame on your paper and cut around it leaving 3cm extra all round as a hem.
5. Put paste along the spar and spine, this strengthens the paper and prevents flapping.
6. Lay the frame in place on the paper, cut notches at the corners and put paste along the overlapping hems. Fold the hems over the framing string and press down firmly.

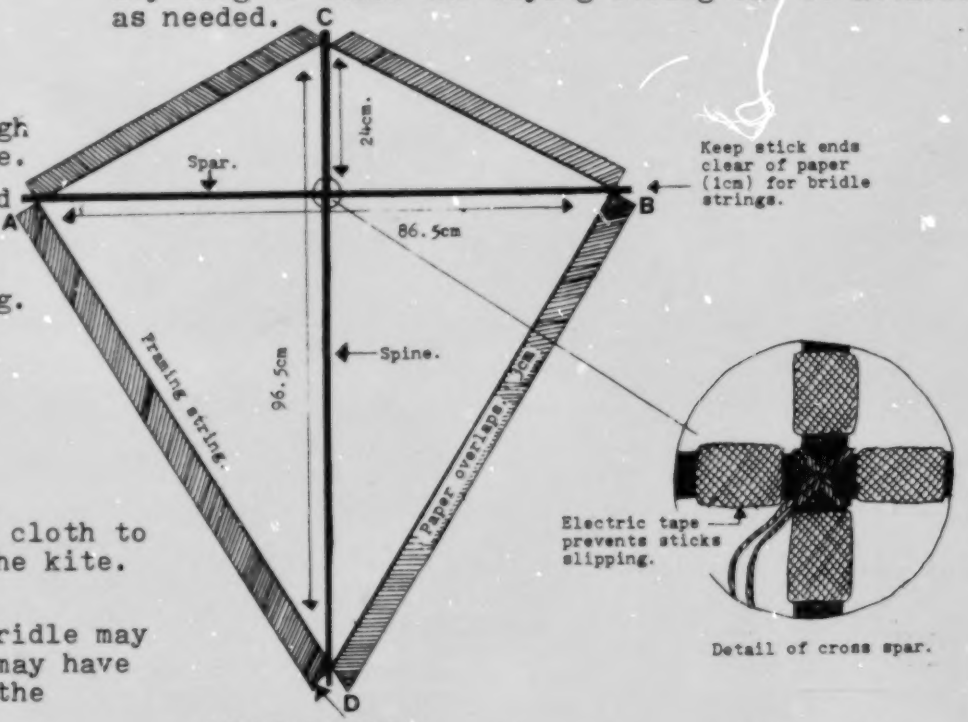
The Tail

Make the tail by attaching scraps of paper or cloth to a strong string and fasten to the bottom of the kite.

To achieve balance when flying the kite the bridle may have to be adjusted up or down, and the tail may have to be shortened or lengthened depending upon the prevailing winds.

The Bridle

1. Tie the macrame across the face of the kite from A - B so that, when pulled, it reaches a point 10 - 12cm in front of the crossed stick point.
2. Tie a second string from C - D long enough to tie to the cross-string at the 10 - 12cm point.
3. After tying these two strings at this point add the key ring to which the flying string can be attached as needed.



All dimensions in cms.

Bow Kite

This is a tail-less kite as stability is provided by the kite rocking on the bow.

Materials

Dowels, 2 x 102cm x 0.95mm
Polythene or light cloth.
5cm masking tape.
Framing string.
Macrame No.5 x 1.5m.
Eyelets.
Key ring.

Directions

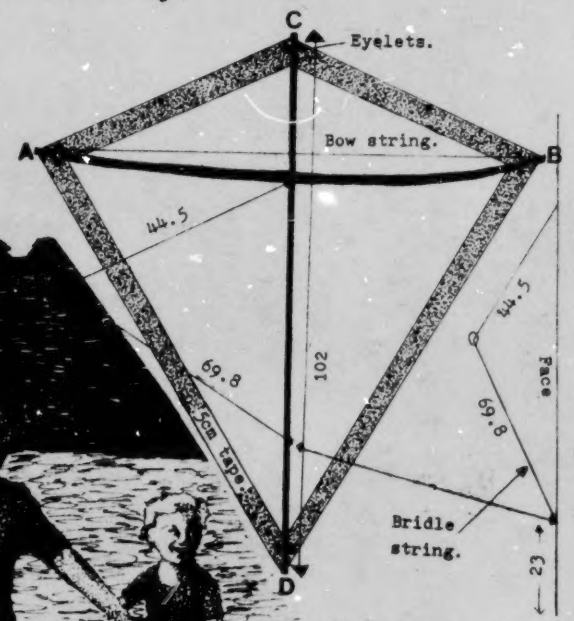
1. Construct frame as for 2-stick kite except that the framing string should not be very tight.
2. Fold the overlap over the string as before. Lay masking tape along each side on its back and flatten the overlap onto the tape. Fold tape and overlap and press down.
3. At each of the stick ends insert two eyelets. Tie a piece of string between the eyelets and the slots at the ends of the spar and spine. This prevents the kite string creeping along the string.

Bowing

1. Slot and tie a piece of string at A and draw it towards B bowing the spar until the string is 11.5cm above the centre point. Slot and tie at B.
2. If the kite tends to cartwheel in flight check bow depth. If correct stretch strings A - D and D - B by squeezing in the sides of the kite, this increases pocketing on each side of the lowere spine. DEEP POCKETING STABILISES THE KITE.

The Bridle

See diagram for the measurements and positioning of the bridle. When threading the bridle through the plastic skin stick a small square of masking tape at the point of entry.



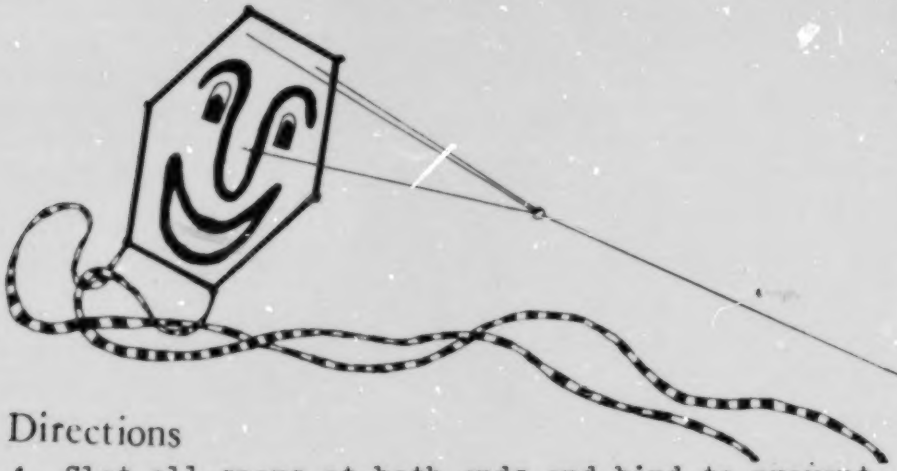
All dimensions in cms.

Hexagonal Kite

This is basically an unstable kite, and therefore needs two tails. However once it is flying it is a strong and high flyer which could be kept up for a whole day or more.

Materials

6mm dowel, 3 x 75cm.
Framing string.
Heavy paper, 80cm x 80cm.
2 paper tails, 300cm x 5cm.
Tape.
Glue.
Line.
Key ring.

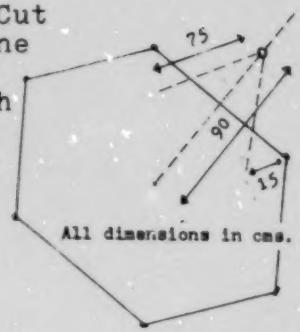


Directions

1. Slot all spars at both ends and bind to prevent splitting, tie the three spars firmly together at their centre points.
2. Attach a line to the end of one spar and run it around the slots in the other spars. Make sure that you keep the ends of the spars equidistant from each other. This is the basic frame.
3. Use the frame as a pattern for cutting out the kite skin. Leave 3cm extra all round for a hem. Nick the corners of the paper, turn the hem over the string and glue down. Take care to keep the paper taut. Untie the knot holding the spars together as the kite skin will now hold them in place.

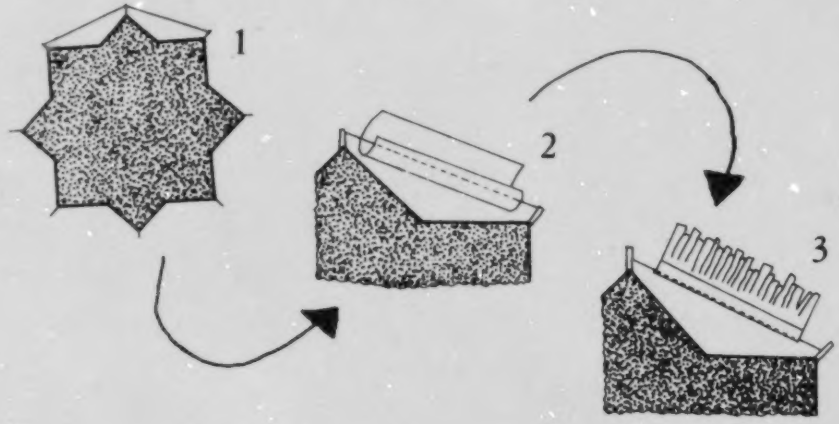
The Bridle

Measure and mark the bridle points at 15cm down the two top spars. Cut two beidle lengths of 75cm and one of 90cm. Allow enough string for tying knots at either end. Attach the bridle strings to the ring. Finally glue on the tail and tie the flying line to the ring.



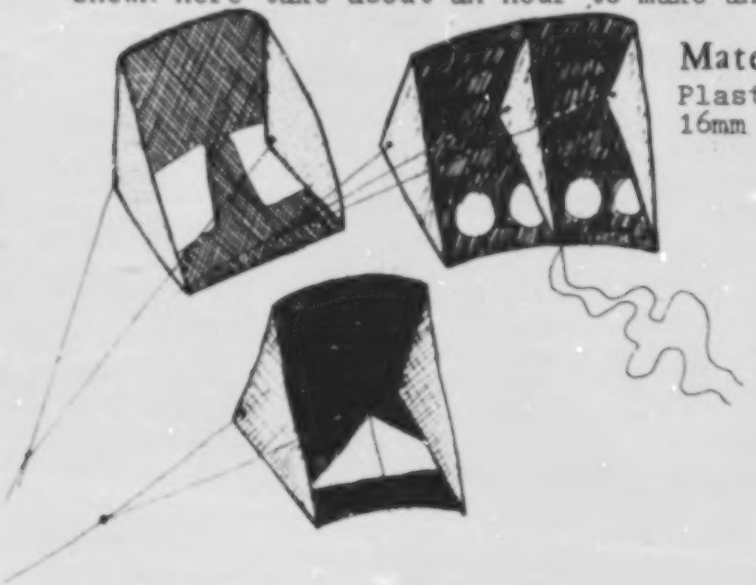
Buzzers

Buzzers may be made quite simply by tying a line tightly between the kite spars and pasting on a paper strip. A fringe may be cut so that the paper will vibrate in the air, making a pleasant buzz.



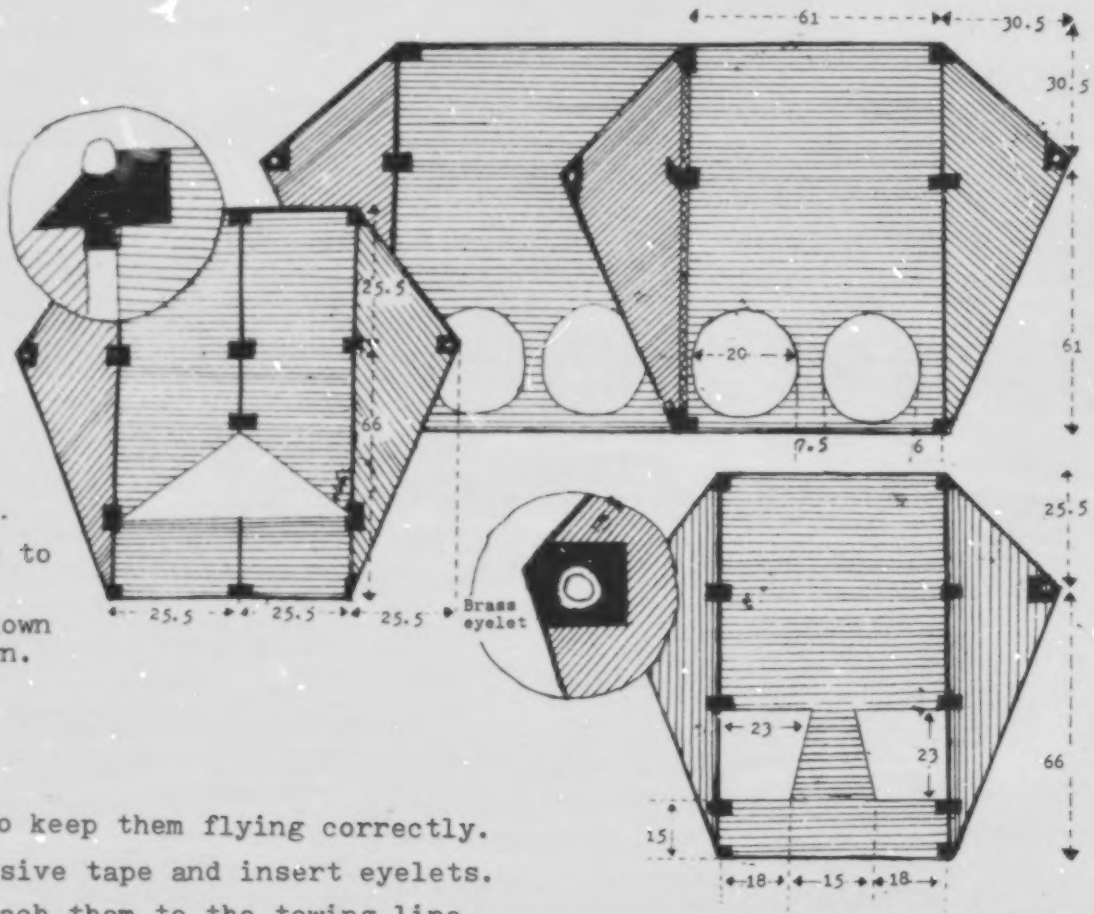
Sled Kites

These are quite new kites having developed out of experiments of people like Scott. The three kites shown here take about an hour to make and fly well in gentle to moderate winds.



Materials

Plastic sheeting or mylar.
16mm dowel.
Carpet adhesive tape.
Eyelets.



All dimensions in cms.

Directions

1. Cut 2/3 spars as required.
2. Mark and cut out the skin taking care to keep measurements exact.
3. Lay the spars on the skin and stick down with adhesive tape at the points shown.

The Bridle

These kites need long bridles in order to keep them flying correctly.

1. Reinforce the bridle points with adhesive tape and insert eyelets.
2. Cut 2/3 x 90cm bridle strings and attach them to the towing line.

SOUND MAKING OBJECTS

Construction

Give free rein to your ideas. Perhaps you might invent a sound object that incorporates two or even all four types of sound.

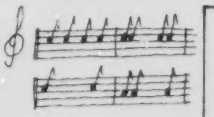
Decoration

Look carefully at what the objects were traditionally used for and see how rain, funerals, festivals etc.were mirrored in decoration.Do something similar or think what are the things that are very important to you eg.hobbies,family, school etc and decorate accordingly.

Materials

Materials may be many and varied(see following pages);but keep on the lookout for others. Test materials for their sound:tap them,scrape them, blow on them.Find what is suitable for your object.

Music

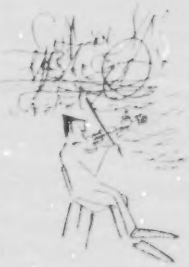


Try making musical equivilants for non-musical sounds such as a storm, a funeral,a football match, a party and so on.

Experiment with different rhythms;one on top of the other.

Form your own band.

Painting



Draw or paint visual representations of the sound of musical instruments.

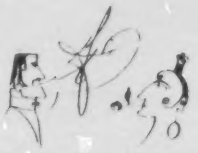
Try painting/drawing other types of sounds.

Dance

These sound objects are very simple and are essentially rhythm makers. Use them to accomany dance at your school.

Drama

Write your own musical play.



21

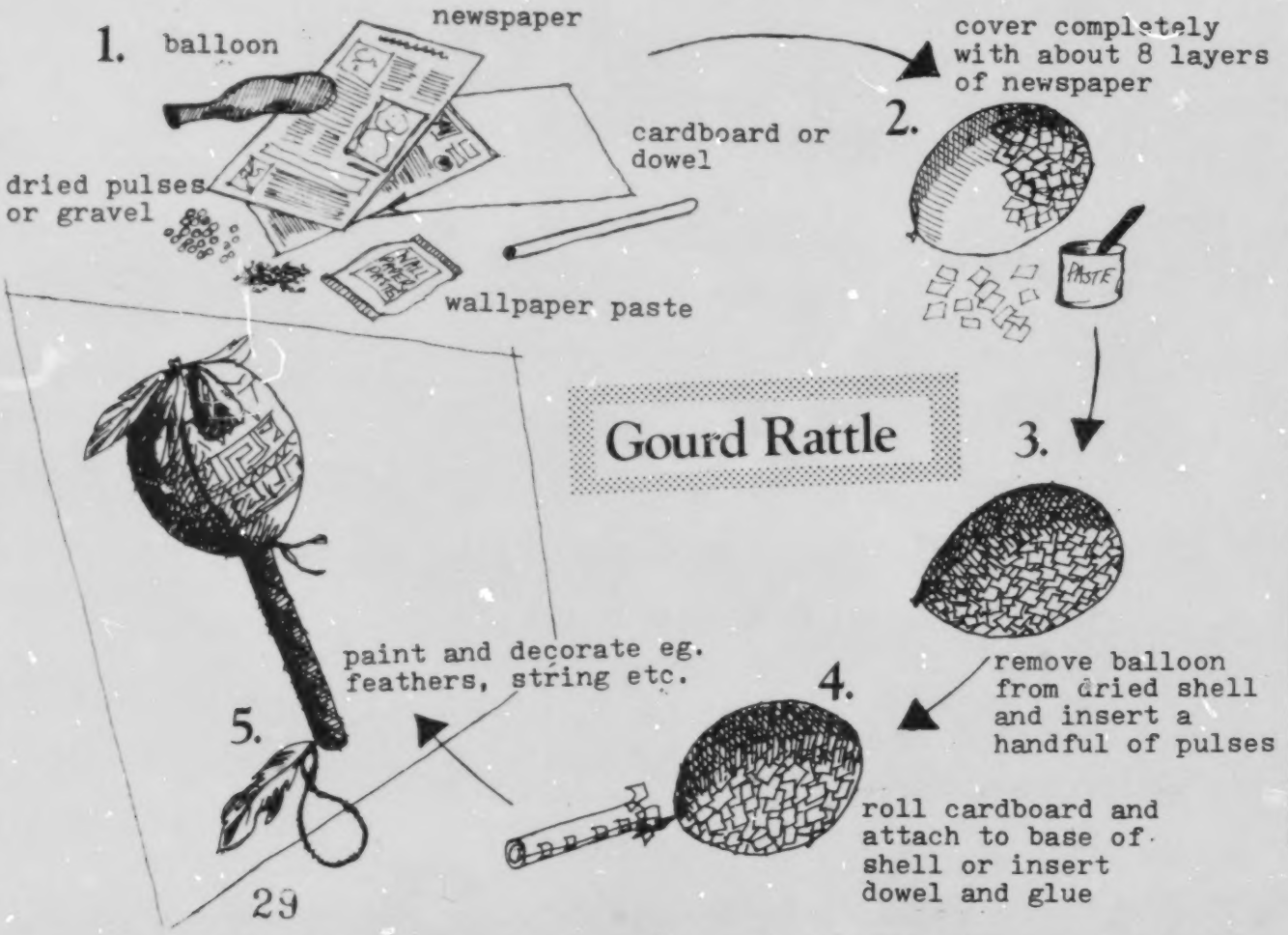
28

Gourd Rattle

In areas where gourds do not grow their shape is often imitated in leather, metal, basketry. You may find gourds difficult to grow....

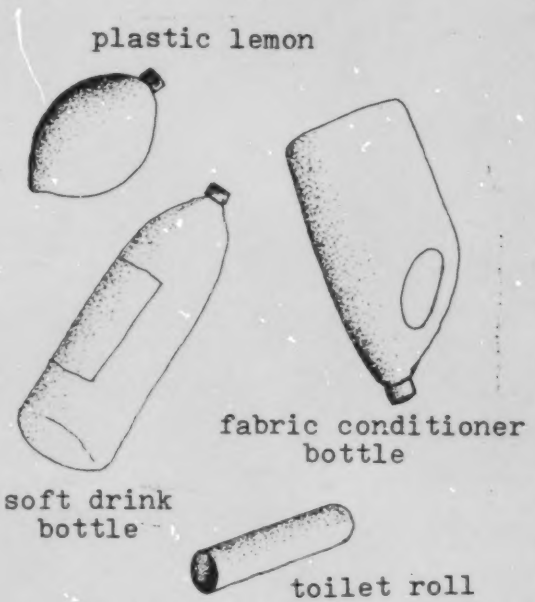
'SO FIND SOME ALTERNATIVES'

for example, a balloon and papier mache.



try other materials

Such as plastic lemon squeezers (perhaps secure a few together), large plastic squash bottles, fabric conditioner bottles(some of these already have a handle built in), toilet rolls etc.



What other containers can you think of ?

Jingle Rattle

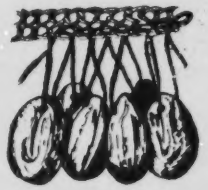
traditional

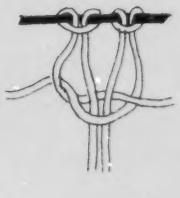
deer hoof
fruit shells
sea shells

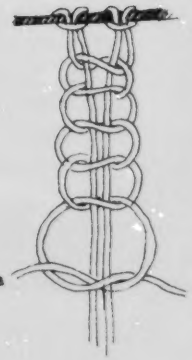
Rattling Materials

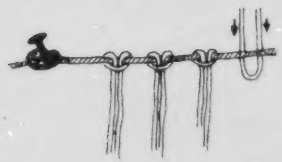
adaptations

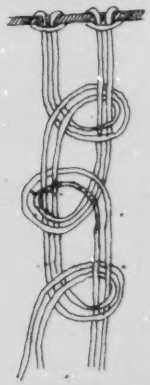
pieces of fired clay decorated with coloured glazes; tin cans; off-cuts from the metal work room etc.etc.

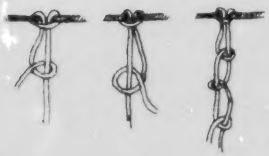


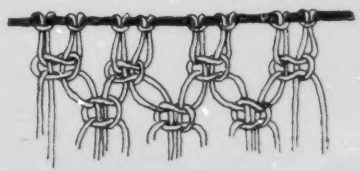






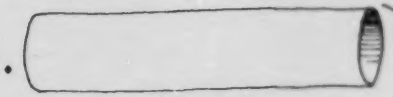






Tubular Rattle

1.



long cardboard or plastic tube

plastic straws

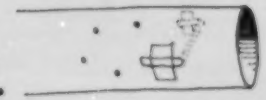
2.

straws inserted through holes made both sides of the tube

DECORATION

In Central and South America this instrument is often used as a fertility device....its sound being like the patter of rain. Think about a design for your rattle that will enhance the sound. For instance, symbols representing rain, thunder, lightning, wind, gales, blizzards, snow, black ice etc.

3.

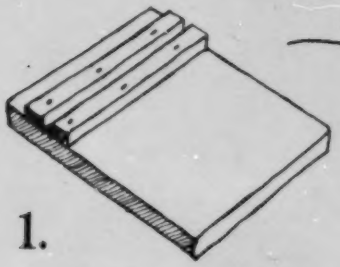


straws bent back and taped to the side of the tube...repeat from top to bottom.

insert pebbles, seeds or pulses and cover the ends 4.

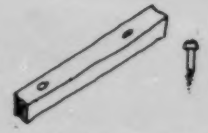
Left, are variations on a simple macrame technique. Craft books will show many others.....alternatively invent some for yourself. Try various knots and plaiting with wool, thick thread, string or anything that is handy. If you have only plain string you could colour it with paint or dye it by soaking it in water with coloured tissue paper or even things from the kitchen such as turmeric or cochineal.

Sanza



1.

two strips of wood screwed onto a ply-wood base



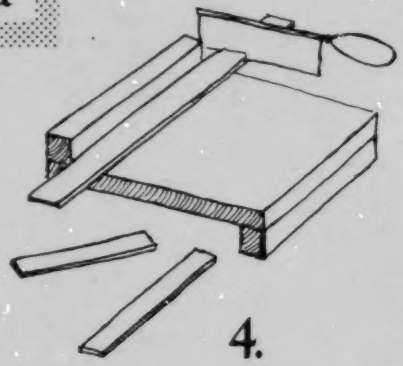
2.

another strip of wood with two holes drilled for screws

3.

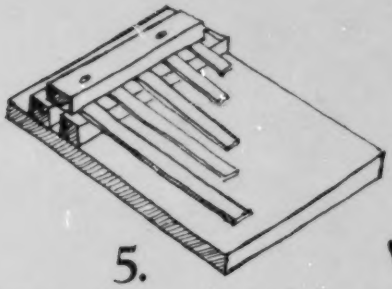
fit first piece over and between the first two

Sanza



4.

cut lengths of thin ply-wood each one longer than the next



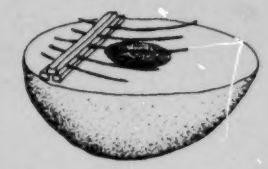
5.

slide these thin pieces between the first three and screw down to secure

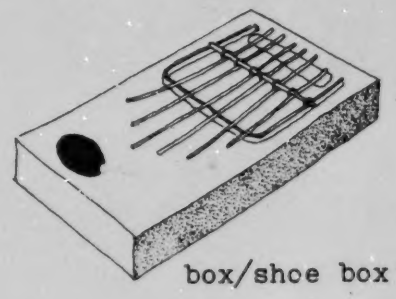
MATERIALS

Traditionally the sanza is made from local timber or is constructed onto a gourd or calabash. The illustration on the left is of sanza made from 1½" wood and thin plywood. For the sound box you might use a balloon and papier mache shell, made the same way as for a rattle and then cutting it in half, covering the top and attaching the tongues. A shoe box or a biscuit tin could also be used.

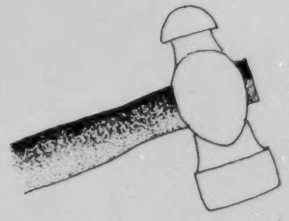
For the tongues you could replace the strips of plywood with pieces of split garden cane or strips of metal flattened at the ends with a hammer.



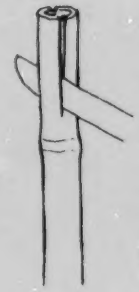
paper mache shell



box/shoe box



metal tongues flattened with hammer.



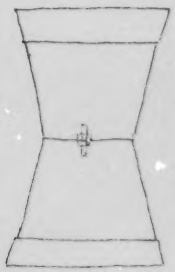
strips of split garden cane can be used for the tongues instead

Hour Glass Drum

the shell

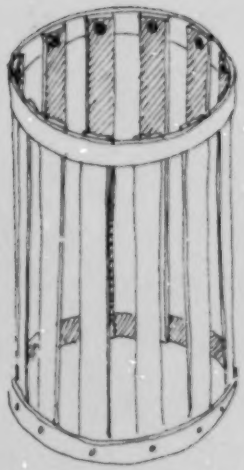
For the body of the drum you can use:

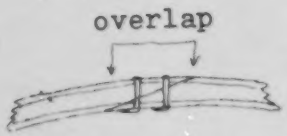
1. Two plastic flower pots about 7ins diameter. These often have a slight dome in the centre of the base surrounded by drainage holes. Place the pots base to base so the holes coincide and bind tape around them to fasten them together. Drill ¼in holes through the centre of the bases and bolt them together so they are forced against each other. Smooth away any rough edges especially around the rims where the drum skins are to be attached.

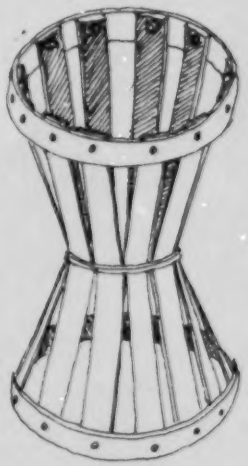


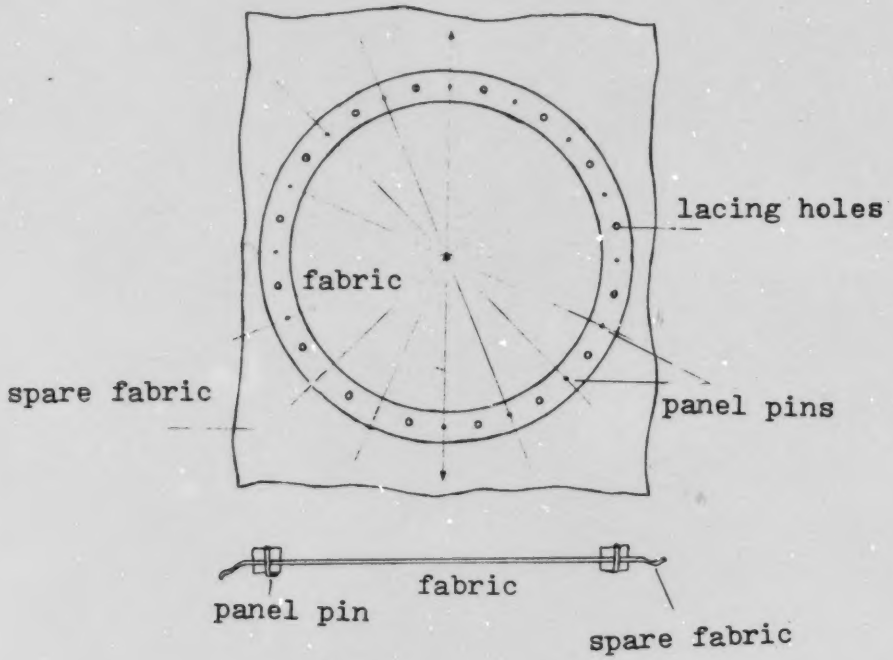
flower pots

2. A shell consisting of a plywood frame. Twelve strips of plywood are bolted to a pair of hoops to form a cylinder. The strips are cut across the surface grain so that they will bend fairly easily. The hoops can be made from two strips of plywood, again cut across the grain, the ends tapered together as shown in the diagram. To bend the rims into place, immerse a little at a time, in boiling water (be careful!) and curve it gently ensuring not to break the wood. Form the strip into a circle with an overlap. Bend together and leave to dry. When dry they can be secured with glue and panel pins.









tuning

This drum is easily tuned to any pitch. Tie a piece of cord around its waist, and insert a toggle of thin wood. Twist this to tighten to the required amount.

drum head

These consist of plywood hoops(four for each drum),4mm thick with a piece of lighweight tricel fabric clamped between two of them and treated with copydex adhesive. Cut out four hoops, 25cm outer diam and 21cm inner diam, with a fret saw and then sand them. Lay the fabric between two hoops evenly ensuring the grain of the plywood runs in opposite directions Spread copydex between the two hoops and over the surface of the fabric. Pull taut and secure the hoops together with panel pins(make sure all pins are equidistant). Between each panel pin bore a hole for the lacing.

lacing

Thread nylon cord through the holes in the hoops as shown in the drawing. Knot the ends and secure with copydex. Dust a little talcum powder on the rims of the shell then stand the drum centrally on the heads and place the other on the top. The drawing shows the heads laced together. For this you will need about eleven more yards of cord. Pull the lacing tight enough to keep the heads in place, but not any tighter. The drum may now be tested. Hold it under one arm, and try playing it on different parts of the head with various beaters or with finger tips. Squeeze the lacing as evenly as possible to produce changes in pitch.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Traditional materials and some adaptations:

PLAYING CARDS

- Islamic patterns — intricate patterns of your own
- royalty court figures — important people
  - your family
  - politicians
  - teachers
  - YOURSELF
- SYMBOLS
  - swords and batons: anything symbolic of something e.g. chips to represent your school (dinners)
  - symbols of court, state and nobility
  - coins and money — anything precious or valuable e.g. a pet or even a credit card!
- incarnations of Vishnu and the story of Rama
  - Hindu folklore
  - religious stories
  - traditional stories

Traditional designs and adaptations:

- Hand painting
  - crayon
  - felt pen
  - paint
  - collage
  - scrap and waste
  - inks
- layers of paper or cotton
  - layers of paper or cotton
  - raw hide
  - parchment or 'aged' paper
- bark
  - bark
  - leaves
- printing
  - string or material printing
  - cardboard print
  - potato print
  - printing with small objects
  - lino cut
  - stencil

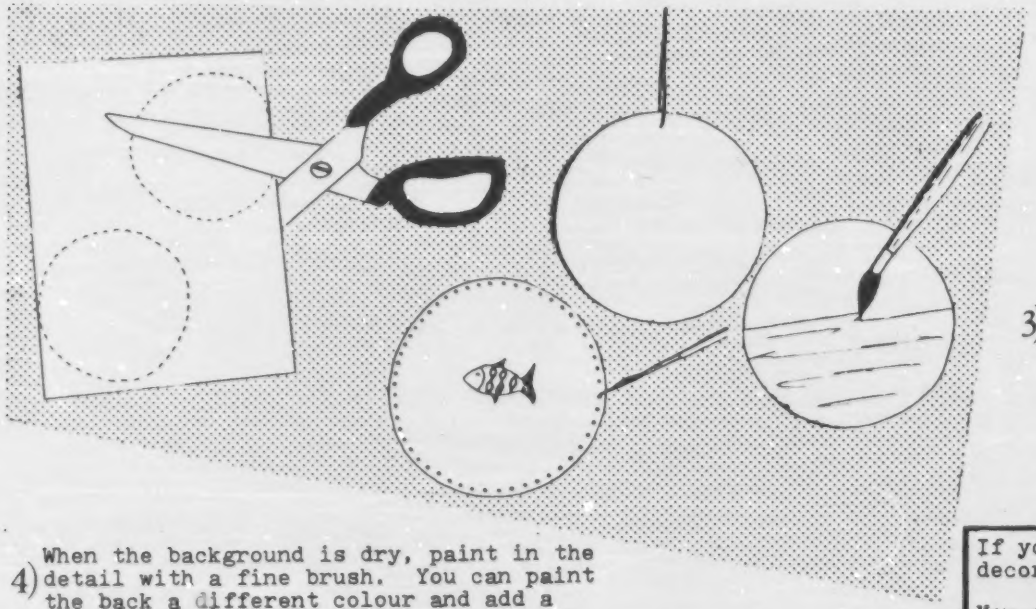
Making Indian Playing Cards

Traditional Indian playing cards are usually made from thin layers of paper or material glued together, then painted and lacquered. (p. 27)

You will need:

Paper, thin card or stiff, plain cotton material such as interfacing
Rabbit size or thick glue solution
Poster or acrylic paints
Paper varnish, nail varnish or P.V.A.

1) Cut circles of the size you require out of the paper or material.



2) Glue 5 or 6 layers of paper together or if using material, saturate 3 or 4 pieces in glue solution, stick them together and hang them on a thread to dry.

3) When the circle is dry paint on the basic background colour in a thick, dense layer.

4) When the background is dry, paint in the detail with a fine brush. You can paint the back a different colour and add a simple symmetrical pattern.

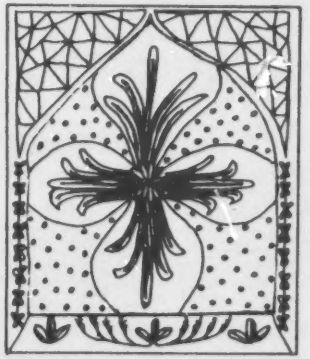
Finally, when all the paint is dry you can varnish the card.

41

Islamic Patterns

The Islamic playing cards of Mamluk Egypt were decorated using various traditional, intricate patterns (pp.12/13) based on geometric designs and plant and flower forms.

The Mamluk cards are mostly symmetrical in design. You can create your own intricate patterns in ink, crayon or paint. There are many books available on Islamic patterns. You can also create your own, perhaps by working with a ruler, moving out from a central point.



If you make a few cards you could make a decorated box to keep them in.

You can illustrate the cards with one of the incarnations of Vishnu (pp. 25-26) or perhaps as you imagine you might like to be reincarnated.

42

Bark and Rawhide

Some native North American people made playing cards from bark, which looked like this:

You will need:

Pieces of dry bark
Poster paint and brush

If you can find some dry bark which has fallen from a tree, it is easy and effective to paint it in this way.

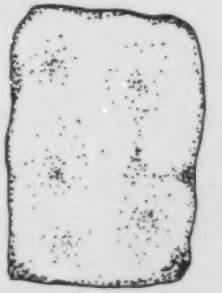
Try using different coloured crayons.

We cannot make cards from leather in the same way as the native North Americans because most leather today is tanned and cannot be drawn upon. However, we can treat ordinary white paper to look like raw hide in a variety of ways:

1) By crumpling the paper, opening it out, and rubbing lightly over it with a soft brown crayon, then ironing it out.

2) By carefully scorching the paper over a candle.

3) By covering the paper with a layer of fine sand and blowing paint through a diffuser on to the sand coated paper, tipping off the sand when the paint is dry to leave a mottled effect.



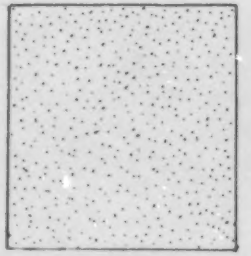
Drop candle wax onto the paper. When picked off it will leave a transparent mark like on raw hide

Two up-to-date aces of cups

Do some modern variations on the Spanish suit symbols (see p.16).

You could try to find some natural paints like the Apaches; experiment with grass, flower petals and anything else you can find.

You could imagine yourself into the role of an American Indian and copy modern playing cards as they might have drawn them.



See how many other effects you can make by blowing coloured paint onto sand.

Playing Cards and Repeating Symbols

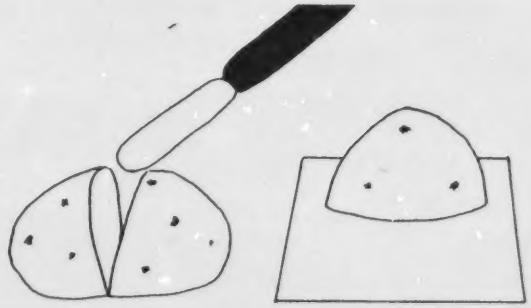
Today, modern playing cards have symbols on them which are repeated identically all over the card and throughout the pack.

By using various methods of printing we can make cards with regular repeating symbols. We can also achieve many varied and interesting effects by moving away from typical playing card format.

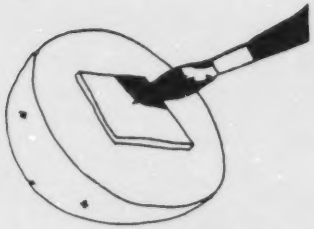
Potato Printing

You will need:

A few potatoes
A knife for cutting the potato
Poster paints
A paint brush
Kitchen paper
Paper or card to print onto



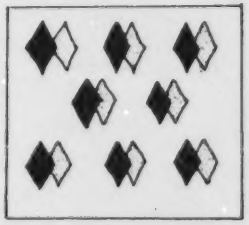
1) Cut a potato in half and place it cut-side down on kitchen paper so that it loses any excess moisture.



2) Draw your design onto the cut surface. Cut into the outline of the design with your knife, then slice away the edges of the potato around the design leaving the design standing out in relief.

3) Apply paint to the design and you are ready to print with it.

Some of the best effects can be gained by printing in one colour, cleaning your potato, and printing again overlapping your original print marks using a different colour.

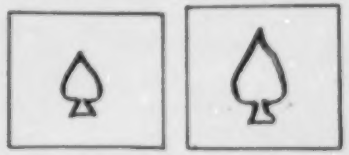


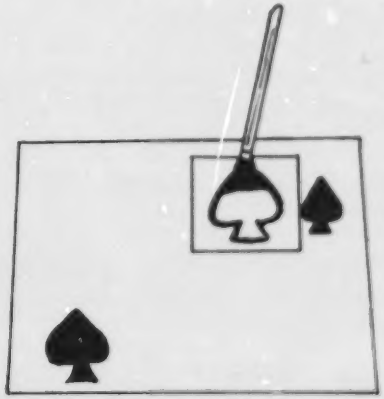
Stencils

You will need:

Cardboard or celluloid for stencils
Card or paper for printing
A stiff brush
Cutting tool
Thick paint

1) Draw your design onto cardboard or celluloid and cut it out with a pocket knife or cutting tool.





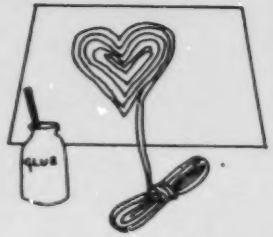
2) Place the stencil over a sheet of paper and holding it very steady apply the paint through the design to the paper below. Lift the stencil off carefully taking care not to smudge the paint.

A number of different stencils can be used to build up one interesting pattern.

Twine and Fabric Printing

You will need:

Material, string or similar
Thick cardboard for a base
Paper for printing
Roller and coloured inks
Glue to stick fabric to card



1) Glue pieces of string, cord or pieces of heavily textured material (e.g. wool tweed or needlecord) onto cardboard in the desired shape

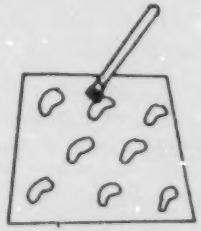
2) Using the roller, apply ink to the string or material. Place your paper over the string or material and press the two firmly together, a better print may be gained by pressing on top with a clean roller a better print may be gained by going over the paper with a clean roller.

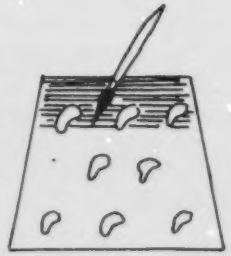
Batik with Paper

You will need:

A wax candle
A tin can
A brush
Paper
Paints
Newspapers
An iron

2) Use the wax to paint your design onto a piece of paper. You cannot gain a very accurate design using wax, so be prepared to make it quite simple.



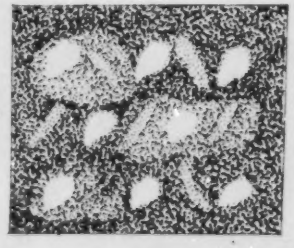


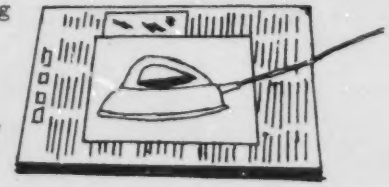
1) Melt the wax candle in a tin can on a stove but do not let the wax boil.

3) Now cover the paper with paint. The colour will only stay on the areas that have not been covered with wax.

4) When the paint is dry, place the paper, waxed side down, on a pile of newspapers and iron out the wax.

The paper may be waxed and dyed several times to build up the design. Always use light coloured paint first, graduating to darker colours.

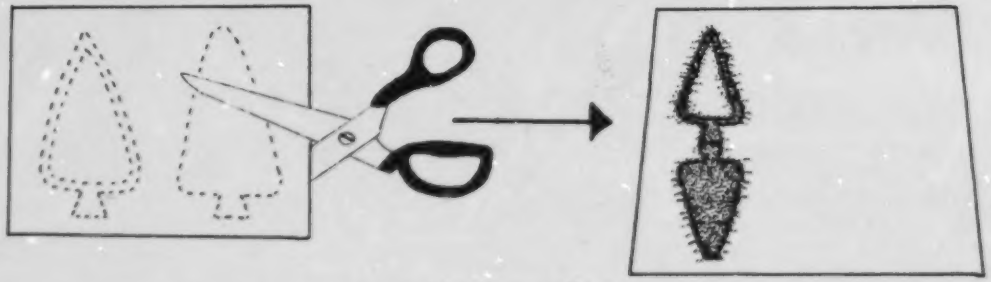




5) Don't iron off the wax until you've built up all the different layers of colours.

Rubbings

1) If you place a coin under a piece of paper and rub over the paper with a crayon, an impression of the coin will appear. This principle can be used to create interesting designs.



You will need:

Paper for rubbing
Soft crayons
cardboard from which to cut rubbing shapes

2) You can cut out your own shapes for rubbing from cardboard and arrange them under your paper as you wish, moving them around a number of times in order to make the pattern repeat.

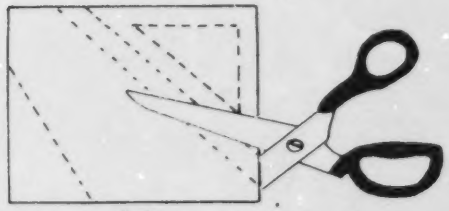
Try rubbings with pieces of string, fabric, bark or anything else you think might give an interesting effect.

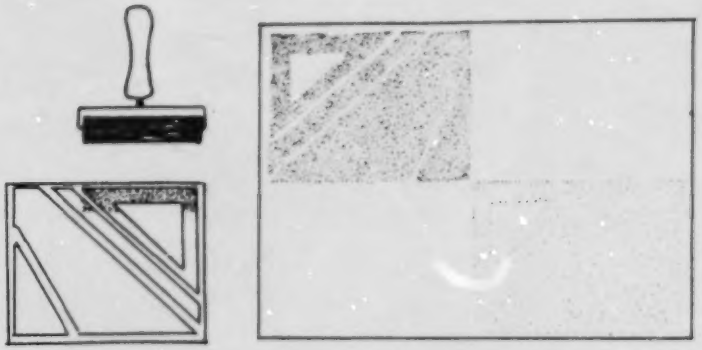
Cardboard Printing

You will need:

Pieces of cardboard and paper
Paper to print on
A roller and coloured inks
Glue

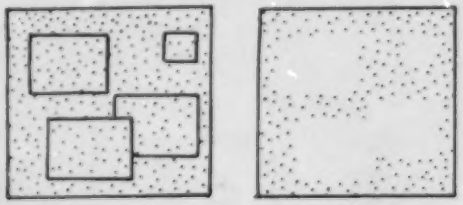
1) Cut out cardboard shapes to create the design you require and stick them on to a firm piece of card to create a printing block.



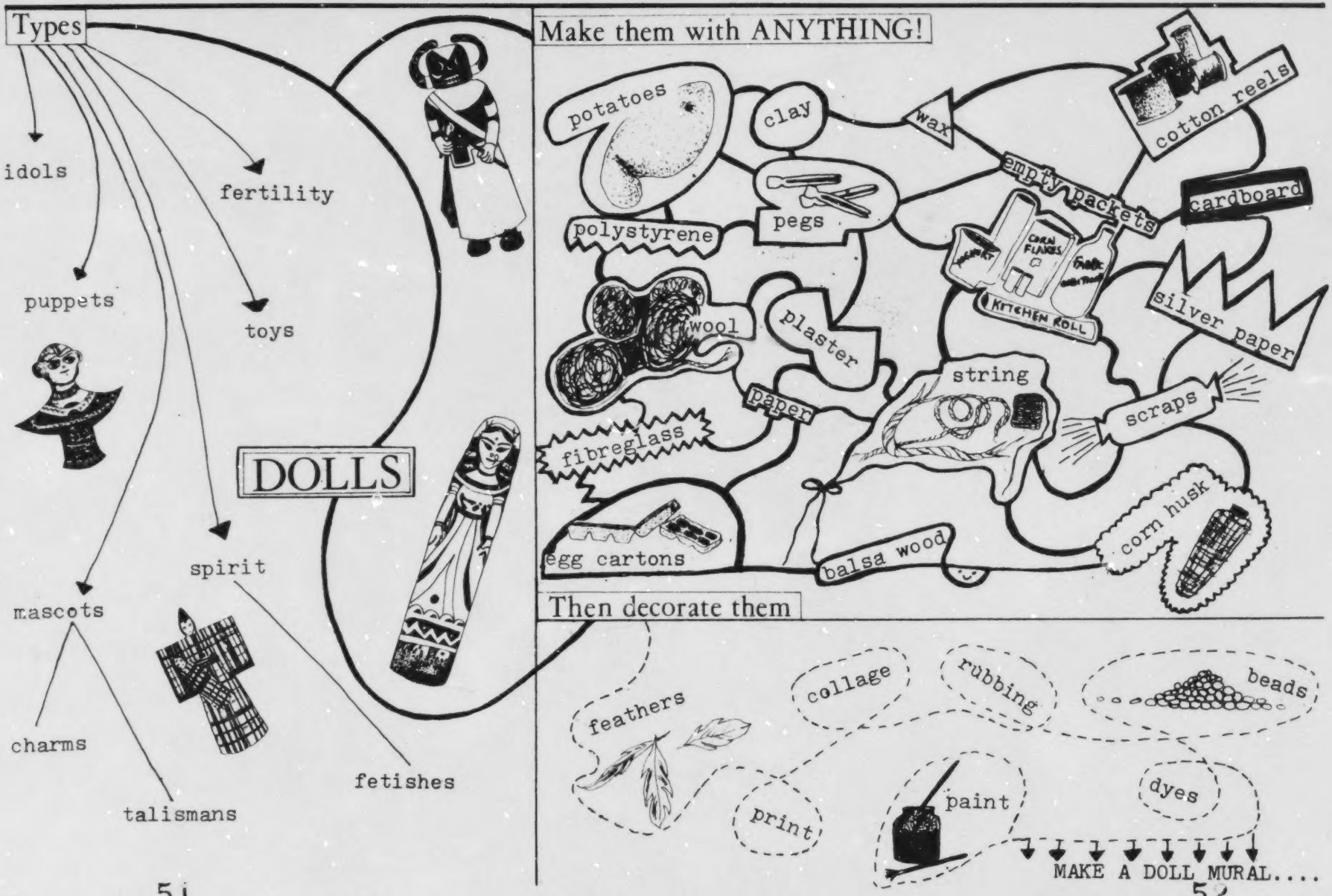


2) Ink your roller and cover the cardboard printing surfaces of your block with ink. You can then press the block onto paper in order to print with it.

Or cut out paper shapes of the required design and lay them over the paper on which you want to print.



Ink your roller and cover the paper and paper shapes with ink. When the shapes are removed the design will appear in white on a coloured surface.


Types
idols
puppets
fertility
toys
mascots
spirit
charms
talismans
fetishes
DOLLS
Make them with ANYTHING!
potatoes
clay
wax
cotton reels
empty packets
cardboard
pegs
polystyrene
KITCHEN ROLL
silver paper
wool
plaster
string
paper
scraps
fibreglass
corn husk
egg cartons
balsa wood
Then decorate them
feathers
collage
rubbing
beads
print
paint
dyes
MAKE A DOLL MURAL....

51

52

Representations

Stories

Think of things about your own life and make a doll which represents them...

53

Idols

Make dolls representing your idols...

54

Tilting Dolls

Materials

Balloon, glue and newspaper.

Directions

1. Blow up your balloon and cover in papier mache making sure to keep the layers even and smooth.

2. When the paper is COMPLETELY dry burst the balloon. Make a stand for your papier mache container with a ring of paper.

The Tilting Action

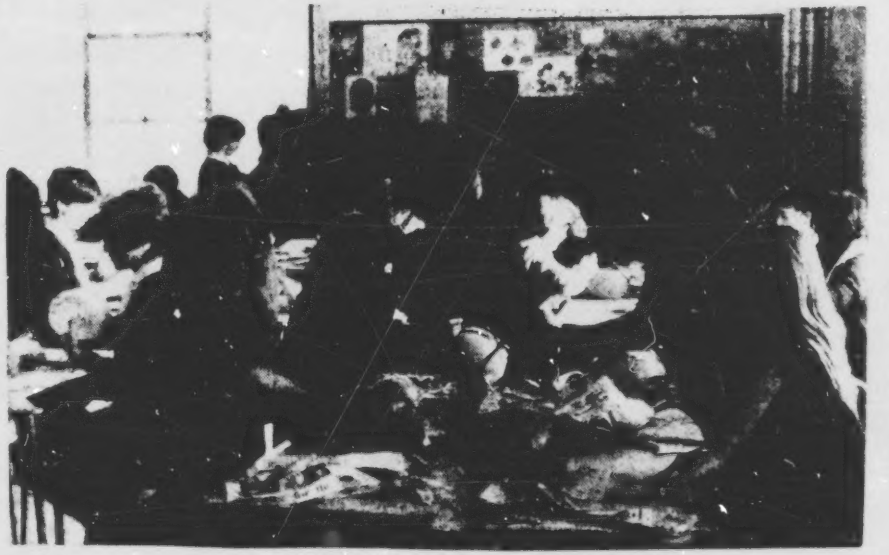
2 suggestions:-

1. Pour rice or seeds into the container through the hole at the top. The right amount should ensure that the doll will return to a standing position when gently pushed. Cover the hole with more papier mache.

2. Cut the container in half, build up more layers of papier mache inside the bottom half and rejoin the two halves securing them with more papier mache. Leave to dry.

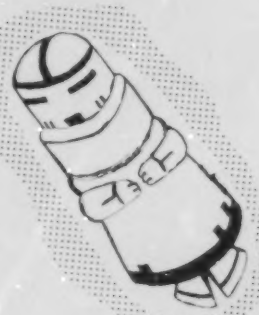
Decoration

While the doll is drying think about how you will decorate it. If you want it to be really authentic you could look at some Japanese paintings or prints and see if you can reproduce typically Japanese marks and decoration. You could use a design that is particularly important to you.



Kachina Dolls

Traditional Kachinas



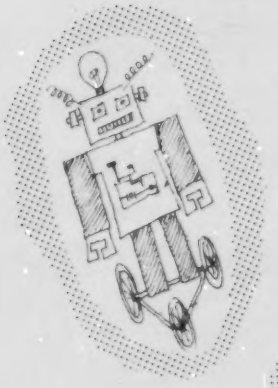
Materials

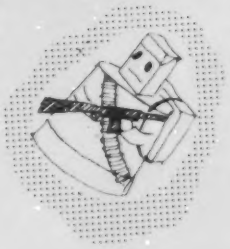
Plastic bottles, cartons, straws, boxes, cotton reels, buttons, beads, paper, glue, feathers, cardboard, cloth scraps, chicken wire, plaster etc.

Directions

With these dolls you can really let your imagination loose! Think about the beliefs and dolls of the Hopi and then make up a modern-day equivalent - a Football Kachina!!, a Politician Kachina!!, a Pop-Star Kachina!! Then take an empty container of any shape or size and start adding bits of scrap paper, cloth and plastic to develpoe the shape. After which you can use whatever other materials are available to decorate your Kachina.

Modern Equivalents





Indian Clay Dolls

Clay is very malleable. You can cut it, squeeze it, pull it, shape it, twist it, press it, pat it, bend it, smooth it, roll it, beat it, join it, pinch it and stick bits of it together!!

Ideas

1. Look at the pictures of the clay dolls of India and see if you can make something similar. Paint them in vivid, energetic colours to make them look even more Indian.

2. Design your own 'Mother and Child' dolls or 'Mummy' dolls with a distinctly 20th century, European look.

20th century
'Mummy Doll'

20th century
'Mother & Child'

3. Think of themes such as 'Conversations between Two', 'Monday Morning', 'Happy', 'Sad'. If more than one person chooses the same theme and make a doll, or dolls, based upon it, the results and variations can be compared and discussed.

Variations on the theme
"Conversations between Two"

Kokeshi Dolls

Traditional Kokeshi Dolls

Materials

In Japan Kokeshi dolls are made from wood, turned on a lathe. If your school has the facilities, try some lathe work for yourself. However, other materials you might use could be a piece of tree branch or balsa wood carved or whittled and then finished with sandpaper. Or even a piece of corn cob.

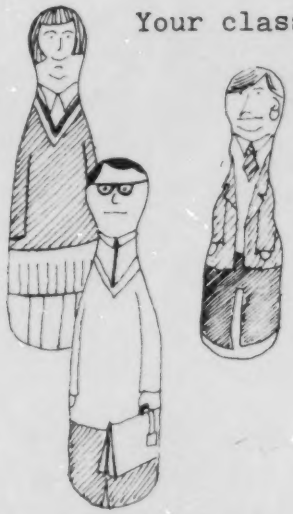
Decoration

Decorate your dolls with brightly coloured paints.....varnish them too if you can. String and coloured wool might be wrapped around them also.

Why not represent a sportsman, or even the whole team?

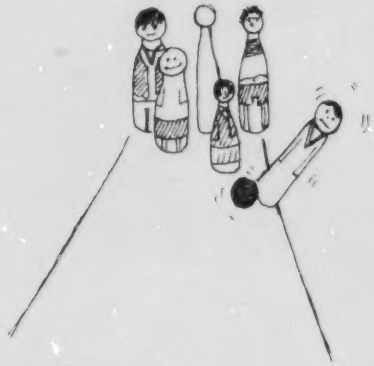
Kokeshi 'Botham'

Your class mates



Perhaps each member of the class could make a Kokeshi doll representing the person sitting next to them, resulting in a complete classroom of dolls.

A game of skittles



If your dolls are robust enough you will have a ready made game of skittles. Using a sponge ball aim at the dolls lined up some feet away.

INDEX

The index lists page references for each book in the pack under the following headings:

Beliefs/Customs/Festivals.
Children.
Countries/Regions/Peoples.
Designs.
Games/Competitions.
Geography/History/Trade.
Instruments/Dance/Song.
Materials.
Processes.

BELIEFS/CUSTOMS/FESTIVALS

DOLLS: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19.

KITES: 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 11, 13, 14, 15, 17, 21, 23.

PLAYING CARDS: 1, 2, 8, 10, 13, 14, 16, 18, 23, 25, 26, 27.

SOUND MAKING OBJECTS: 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 20, 21, 23, 24, 25, 28, 29, 31, 32, 34.

IDEAS & RESOURCES: 1, 2, 10, 12, 22, 23.

CHILDREN

DOLLS: 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16, 17, 18.

KITES: 3, 5, 13.

PLAYING CARDS: 1. 17.

SOUND MAKING OBJECTS: 6, 7, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16.

IDEAS AND RESOURCES: 2, 23.

COUNTRIES/REGIONS/PEOPLES

DOLLS:
Arizona 2, 3; Bombay 12; China 16; Colorado Plateau 2; Hopi 2, 3, 4, 6; India 10; Japan 13ff; Kalighut (Calcutta) 10; Kansai (Japan) 13; Little Colorado River 2; Painted Desert 2; San Francisco Mountain Peaks 3.

KITES:
Australia 20; Britain 19, 20, 21, 22; China 2, 3, 4; Dacians 4; Dutch Traders 9; Europe 3, 4, 19; France 21; Germany 21; Guatemala 14; Hawaii 23; India 9; Indonesia 16; Japan 5, 10; Korea 2, 11, 12, 13; Malaysia 4, 18; Maori 23; Maps 1; Melanesia 16; Middle East 3, 4; North America 19, 22; Pacific Islands 14; Persians 4; Romans 3, 4; South America 14; Scythians 4; Tyrol 4.

PLAYING CARDS:
Afghanistan 14; Africa 14; Apaches 17, 18, 20, 21; Arabia 14; Arapho 19; Arizona 17; Arya 25; Asia 14; Belgium 26; Brazil 7; China 3; Dakota 19; Egypt 3, 12; England 2, 4, 26; Europe 3, 12; France 5, 6, 8, 10; Germany 4, 6; India 2, 3, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27; Indonesia 7, 14; Italy 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 12; Iran 3; Iraq 14; Japan 3, 7; Java 3, 7; Libya 14; Mexico 3, 16, 18, 20, 21; Morocco 7, 14; Native Americans 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22; North America 6, 16, 17; Pakistan 14; Persia 14; Portugal 3, 7, 26; Sioux 22; South America 7, 16; Spain 3, 4, 6, 7, 14, 16; Switzerland 6; Syria 3, 14; Tunisia 14; Turkey 12, 14, 15;

SOUND MAKING OBJECTS:
Africa 2, 10, 21, 22, 23, 28, 29; America 20; Angola 22; Arowak 6; Ashanti 31, 32; Aztecs 3; Balearic Islands 19; Bantu 23; Bolivia 4; Bororo 6; Brazil 6; Californi 7; Cameroons 27, 29; Central Africa 23, 28, 29; Central America 2, 3; Chaco Indians 5; Chile 4; China 18, 28; Chippewa 6; Columbia 4; Congo 21, 22, 29; Conibo 6; Crete 28; Dogon 13; Eastern Sudan 28; Ecuador 4; Egypt 17, 28; Elema 13, 14, 15; England 18; Ethiopia 26; Europe 19; Fiji 20; France 21; Ghana 2, 30, 31; Grand Chaco 9; Greeks 20; Guiana 6; Hawaii 17; Incas 3, 4; India 20, 28; Indonesia 2, 22; Ivory Coast 31; Japan 18, 20, 28, 29; Korea 18; Lemba 23-25; Malaysia 20; Madagascar 22; Malay 26; Mali 2, 13; Maori 12, 17, 19; Melanesian 14; Mexico 3, 10; New Guinea 18, New Hebrides 28; New Zealand 12, 17, 18, 19; Nigeria 2; North America 2, 11, 18; Oceania 2; Papago tribe 6; Papua, New Guinea 13, 14, 26; Paraguay 5; Peru 3, 4, 6; Pygmies 21; Russia 19; Sierra Leone 3; Sioux 6; Society Islands 20; Solomon Islands 27; South America 2, 3, 5, 8, 10, 11, 15, 18, 26; Spaniards 3, 4; Sudan 28; Teton Tribe 6; Togo 10; Uganda 22; West Africa 10, 13, 26, 30; Wollo 26; Yoruba 29; Zaire 22.

COUNTRIES/REGIONS/PEOPLES cont...

IDEAS & RESOURCES:
Africa 1, 2; Apache 1, 18; Central America 12; Egypt 17; Hopi 1, 25; India 17; Japan 1, 24, 27; North America 1, 18; Pacific 2, Spain 1, 18; South America 12.

DESIGNS

DOLLS: 3, 4, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 19;

KITES: 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20;

PLAYING CARDS: 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 12, 13, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24, 26; (backs) 5, 24, 27;

SOUND MAKING OBJECTS: 2, 3, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 25, 26, 27, 28, 30, 32, 34, 35.

IDEAS & RESOURCES: 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27.

GAMES/COMPETITIONS

KITES: 2, 8, 9, 10, 13, 18, 21.

PLAYING CARDS: 1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 10, 11, 16, 17, 20, 23, 24.

IDEAS & RESOURCES: 4, 27.

GEOGRAPHY/HISTORY/TRADE

DOLLS: 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19.

KITES: 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 11, 13, 18, 19, 20, 21.

PLAYING CARDS: 3, 4, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 23, 24, 26,

SOUND MAKING OBJECTS: 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14, 18, 19, 20, 21, 29, 31.

IDEAS & RESOURCES: 17.

INSTRUMENTS/DANCE/SONGS

DOLLS: 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9.

KITES: 23.

SOUND MAKING OBJECTS: 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 32, 34, 35.

IDEAS & RESOURCES: 2, 4, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15,

MATERIALS (TRADITIONAL)

DOLLS:
Bark 15
Beans 5
Bel-fruit gum 12
Bronze 11, 12
Cane 11
Chalk 12
Clay 1, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14
Cloth 8, 11, 17
Colours 3, 8, 12, 14, 17, 19
Corn stalks 7
Cotton wood root 8
Cow dung 10
Feathers 3, 8, 11
Hair 8
Iris leaf 18
Kaolin 8
Knife 8
Lacquer 12
Leather 8
Leaves 11
Paint 4
Paper 14
Papier mache 13
Pith 11, 12
Sticks 3, 8
Tamarind seed paste 12
Tortoise shell 3
Wood 4, 11, 12, 13, 15

KITES:
Areca nut 17
Bamboo 10, 12, 15, 16
Bells 3
Cane 16
Cloth 3
Glass (powder) 10
Glue 10
Grain 6
Leaves 16
Metal wire 2, 16
Paint 10
Paper 2, 5, 12, 14, 18

MATERIALS (KITES) cont...

Pole 3
Porcelain (powdered) 10
Rice 6
Silk 2, 20
Sil plant 17
Spider's web 16
String fibre 10, 16
Wood blocks 10

PLAYING CARDS:
Birch bark 18, 22
Buffalo skin 19
Commercial dyes 22
Enamelled metal 27
Horse hide 18
Ivory 27
Lacquer 26, 27
Paper 3, 27
Raw hide 17, 19
Rock paints 19
Tortoise shell 27
Varnish 23
Vegetable dyes 22
Water Colour 7
Wood 4

SOUND MAKING OBJECTS:
Algoroba beans 5
Animal skin 32, 34
Bamboo 7, 9, 18, 20, 22
Basket work 2
Bark 21
Bee's wax 22
Bone 7
Cane 22
Clay 2, 17
Coconut shells 17
Conch shells 7, 18, 19, 20
Cord 11, 17, 19, 34, 35
Feathers 6, 19
Fruit 9
Fruit shells 7, 9, 17
Glass beads 3
Gourd 2, 3, 5, 6, 10, 17, 23
Hoof 7, 9
Iron 22
Lead shot 3
Leather 2
Metal 2, 7
Nails 10, 34
Nut shells 18
Palm needles 10
Pegs 34, 35
Pigment 11
Porcelain 17
Pulses 3
Reeds 7
Resin 11
Rubber 22
Seeds 2, 3, 10
Shell 3, 9, 20, 32
Sticks 21
Stones 3, 10
String 6, 7, 21, 22
Tree trunk 26
Triton shells 19, 20
Wood 2, 3, 7, 11, 12 20, 21, 25, 32

IDEAS & RESOURCES (traditional materials and adaptations)
Acrylic paint 17
Bark 16, 18, 21
Basketry 11
Balloons 11, 13, 24
Balsa wood 22, 27
Beads 22, 25
Biscuit tin 13
Boxes 25
Buttons 25
Calabash 13
Candle wax 18, 20
Cane 13
Card 17, 19
Cardboard 11, 12, 16, 20, 21, 22, 25
Carpet adhesive tape 9
Cartons 25
Celluloid 19
Chicken wire 25
Clay 21, 22, 26
Cloth 6, 7, 25
Cochineal 12
Coin 21
Collage 16, 22
Copydex adhesive 15
Cotton 16
Cotton material 17
Cotton reels 22, 25
Corn cob 27
Corn husk 22
Crayon 16, 18, 21
Deer hoof 12
Dowel 6, 7, 8, 9, 11
Dyes 22
Egg cartons 22
Electrical tape 6
Eyelets 7, 9
Fabric 20, 21
Feathers 11, 22, 25
Felt pen 16
Fibre glass 22
Flying lines 6, 8
Fruit shells 12
Glue 8, 14, 17, 20, 24, 25
Gourd 11, 13
Gravel 11
Inks 16, 20
Kitchen 22

MATERIALS (IDEAS & RESOURCES) cont...

Key ring 6, 7, 28
Leather 11, 18
Leaves 16
Lino 16
Macrame 6, 7
Masking tape 7
Metal 11, 12, 13
Mylar 4, 9
Nail varnish 17
Needlecord 20
Newspaper 11, 20, 24
Nylon cord 15
Panel pins 14, 15
Paint 11, 16, 18, 19, 22, 27
Packets 22
Paper 4, 6, 8, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 25
Paper varnish 17,
Papier mache 6, 11, 13
Parchment 16
Pebbles 12
Pegs 22
Plaster 22, 25
Plastic containers 11, 25
Plastic flowerpots 14
Plastic sheet 4, 9
Plastic straws 12
Plastic tube 12
Ply-wood 13, 14, 15
Potato 16, 19, 22
Poster paints 17, 18
Polystyrene 22
Polythene 7
Pulses 11, 12
P.V.A. 17
Rabbit size 17
Raw hide 16
Rice 24
Sand 18
Sand paper 27
Scrap 16, 22
Screws 13
Sea shells 12
Seeds 12, 24
Shoe box 13
Spool 6
Stencil 16, 19
Straws 25
String 6, 7, 8, 12, 20, 21, 22, 27
Talcum powder 15
Tape 8
Thread 12
Tin cans 12, 20
Tissue paper 12
Toggle 15
Toilet rolls 11
Tricel fabric 15
Turmeric 12
Twine 20
Varnish 27
Wall paper paste 11
Waste 16
Wax 22
Wood 13, 15, 27
Wool 12, 22, 27
Wool tweed 20

PROCESSES

DOLLS:
Carving/Shaping wood 8
Indian doll 11, 12
Painting 8
Wood turning 15

KITES:
Anchor 7
Bait 17
Decoration 5, 6
Decorative writing 9
Frame making 10
Fringe 14
Glued paper clippings 14
Humming kites 2
Leaves, folded and sewn with twine 16
Paint 10
String preparation 10
Woodblock print 10

PLAYING CARDS:
Birch bark 18, 22
Caligraphy 13
Card making in India 27
Colours 6, 7, 19, 24, 27
Copperplate engraving 4
enamelling 27
Hand colouring 4
Inscriptions 13
Lacquer 27
Lithography 4
Painting 17, 22, 26
Preparation of raw hide 19
Printing 4
Photo-engraving 4
Pounce pattern 27

SOUND MAKING OBJECTS:
Ashanti drum 32
Construction of bullroarer 11
Construction of earth/sand drum 26
Construction of ground bow 11
Construction of hoof rattle 7
Construction of humming tops 18
Construction of jingle rattles 7
Construction of sanza 22, 23, 25

PROCESSES(SOUND MAKING OBJECTS)
cont....

Construction of shell flute 19, 20
Construction of slit drum 27
Construction of tubular rattles 10
Drum skin preparation 34
Feather decoration 6
Filling gourd rattle 2, 3
Fixing skins to drums 34, 35

IDEAS & RESOURCES:

Batik paper 20
Cardboard printing 21
Decoration 10, 12, 17, 18, 19, 20, 24, 27
Drum making 14, 15
Drum tuning 15
Fret sawing 15
Imitation raw hide paper 18
Indian play doll 26
Indian playing cards 17
Kite making 6, 7, 8, 9
Kokeshi doll 27
Lacing 15
Macrame 12
Natural paints 18
Paint blowing 18
Painting 10
Papier mache 11
Play 1, 2, 3
Potato print 19
Rubbings 21
Sanding 15
Stencils 19
Tilting Doll 24
Twine and fabric printing 20
Waxed paper 20

Kites

ETHNOGRAPHIC RESOURCES
FOR ART EDUCATION

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Birmingham Polytechnic,
Margaret Street,
Birmingham, B3 3BX.

Researched and written by Pauline Amphlett; illustrated, designed and produced by Roy Upson, Julie Davies, Kathryn Hemmings and Yvonne Brierley.

CONTENTS

The Distribution of Kites..... 1

The Origins of Kites..... 2

Japanese Kites..... 5

Korean Kites..... 11

Guatamalan Kites..... 14

Kites of South East Asia..... 16

Kites and Science..... 19

Kite Songs..... 23

References..... 24

Bibliography..... 25

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank the following for their assistance in the compilation of this section:

The staff of Birmingham Polytechnic libraries, and the library of the Museum of Mankind.

Dr Schyuler Jones, Liz Edwards and David Todd of the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford.

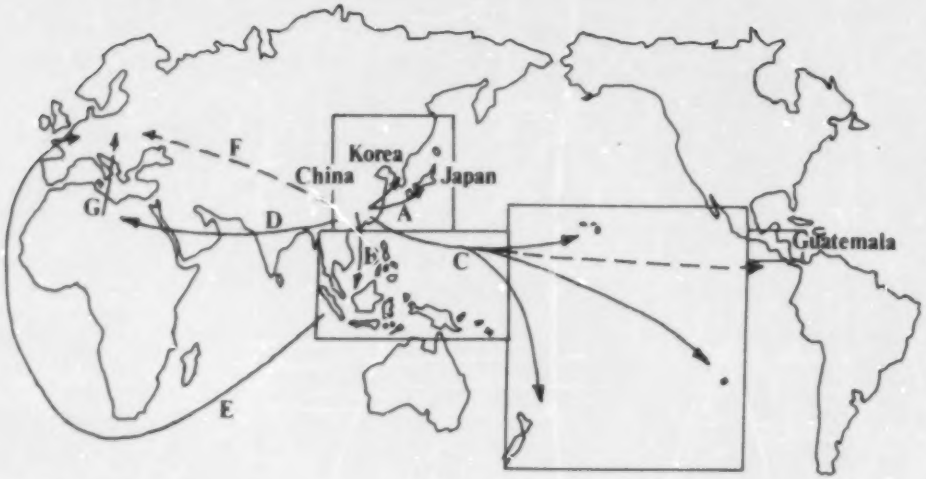
The staff of the Egyptian Department of the British Museum.

Alison Sealy of AFFOR (All Faiths for One Race).

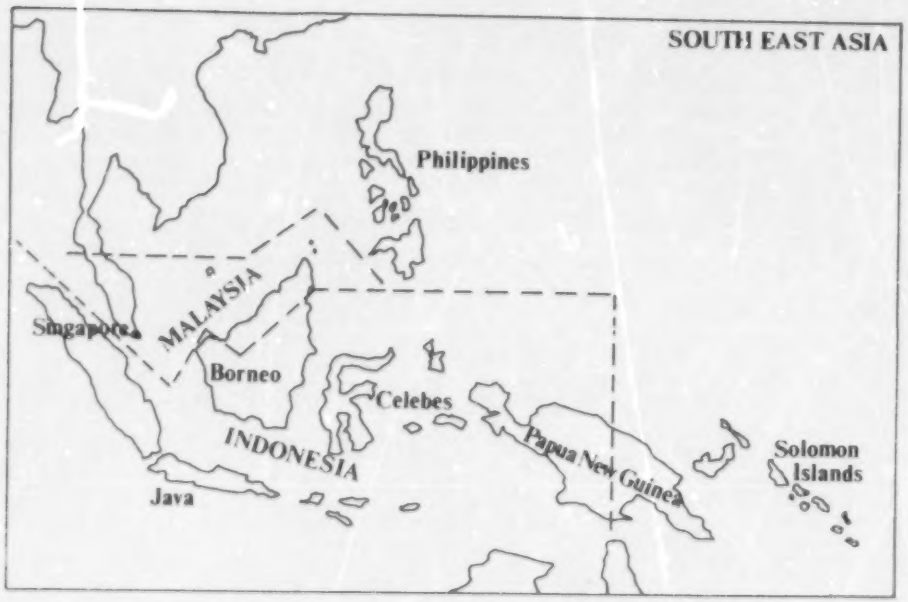
The Inner London Education Authority Learning Materials Service.

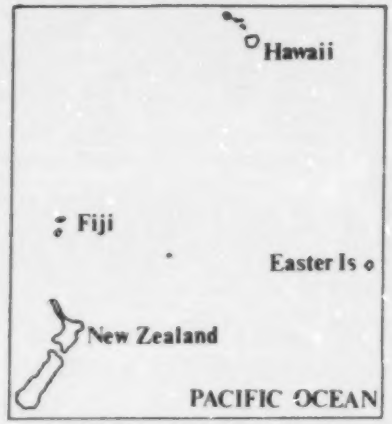
Philip Rawson, Dean of the School of Art and Design at the Goldsmiths' College of London University.

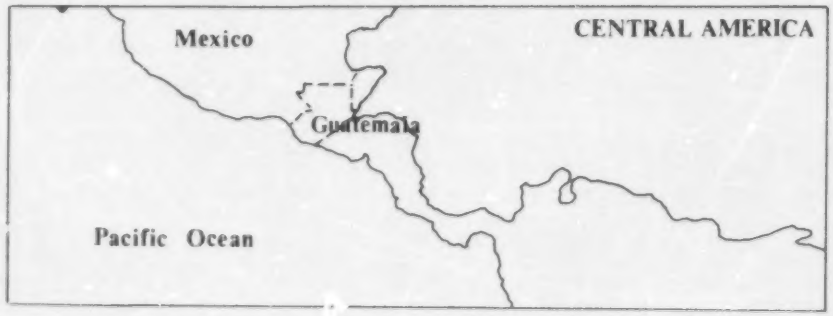
The Distribution of Kites



A. To Korea and Japan.
B. To the Malay Archipelago.
C. Through Oceania, as far east as Easter Island.
D. Through Asia, to Arabia and North Africa.
E. To Europe, via the ocean-going trade routes.
F. Possibly re-introduced during Mongol invasions.
G. Importations from European contact with Arabia.







The Origins of Kites

The East

Kites have been with us for many centuries; so long that the earliest ones have not been recorded in writing. Their specific origins are unknown, but it is believed that they were first flown in Korea and China and then spread throughout South East Asia. It is also possible that they developed separately in different places.

The first clear reference to a kite concerned a Chinese General Han Hsin who was reported to have flown one in 196 B.C., using it to estimate the distance between his army and the walls of a palace in order that a tunnel could be dug allowing his army to enter. It seems that kites were not used for recreational purposes until the Sung period (A.D. 960-1126).[1] It was during this period that their popularity began to grow and kite flying days and festivals were organised. Before this it seems that kites were used for military purposes alone, for signalling and carrying propaganda leaflets.

The Chinese also developed humming kites. Metal strings would be stretched across a hole in the kite which the wind would then vibrate to produce a noise. It was believed that this frightened away evil spirits. There are stories of man-carrying kites and the traveller Marco Polo recorded seeing one in China which was capable of lifting a man, his wife and child. This is not to say that it was actually done; kite-riding was very dangerous and was used as a means of punishment.[2]

These early kites were simple rectangular shapes similar to the Korean kite. In China and Japan, kites became a highly developed art form, taking on unusual shapes and representing animals, insects and birds. Kite flying became a pastime for the rich, as the paper for the kite skins was hand made and the beautiful designs were painted and printed onto them taking many hours of work. Even the silk used for the flying line was so expensive that only the rich could afford it.

The Emperors and ruling classes flew their kites all over South East Asia and the activity of kite flying became connected with festivals and religious ceremonies, particularly for encouraging good harvests and bringing rain.

There are few clues with which to trace the kite's journey to Europe. There are no records of the kite from ancient Greece or Rome, but there are references to it in Islam. It seems to have travelled along the trade routes from China to the Middle East, where according to the limited information available, it was made from Chinese paper, decorated with flag-like designs, adorned with little bells and flown by boys. In Islam there are legends surrounding the kite which date from the time of Mohammed (7th century A.D.). It was said that the false prophet Musailima flew kites with hummers to give the impression that he was communing with the angels.(3)

It could be that European kites were developed from windsocks, quite independently of Eastern influences. The windsock banner had been in existence since the latter days of the Roman Empire. It consisted of a carved open-mouthed head, like that of a dragon, attached to a pole with a cloth tube behind which billowed in the wind.

Mediaeval windsock banner

Flaming torches were placed within the dragon's mouth to make it look fierce, the banner being used to frighten the enemy in war and to inspire courage. On a practical level it could have aided archers by indicating wind strength and direction. The windsock banner was not exclusive to the Romans but was also used by the Chinese, the Scythians, the Persians and the Dacians.

Another likely forerunner to the kite is the pennon, a loose decorative banner on a pole used by the Chinese and Koreans. In Europe there are records of them being in existence in the 14th and 15th centuries, particularly in the Tyrol where they were associated with festivals and firework displays.(4)

However, the kite which did establish itself in Europe in the 16th century, took a very different form to both the windsock and the pennon. It was a simple round-headed peg-top kite, also known as the peardrop kite, consisting of two spars, a curved one for the top, and a straight one for the spine. It is believed to have reached Europe via the Dutch trade routes and is really a version of the Malaysian arch top kite. This kite was modified to a diamond shape, thus requiring only two straight spars, and a tail was added for stability to suit the gusting European winds.

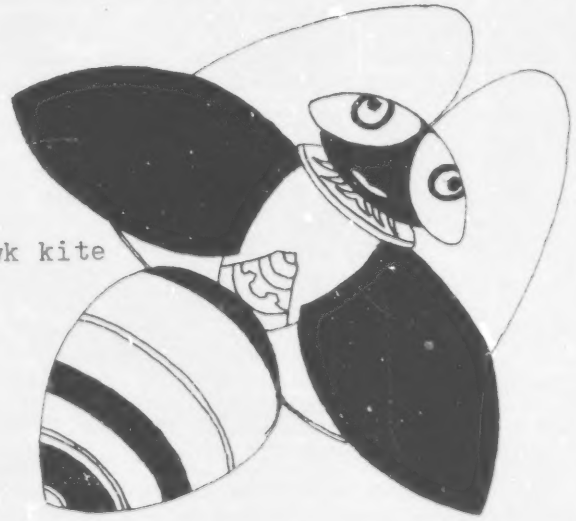
We have seen that the kite has many different uses; that it is a versatile tool as well as a recreational object and that it has been used in many different ways over the centuries. In Europe kite flying has been used for many practical purposes, but has now established itself as a serious sporting activity with clubs and organizations being formed to bring people together on social occasions to fly their kites. We have at last realised that kite flying is for people of all ages, and is an exhilarating pastime in which people from all over the world participate. Perhaps through flying kites we can imagine what it would be like to be a bird and soar above the earth.

Japanese Kites

Of all the countries of the world, Japan has the widest range of kites. It is in Japan that the making and flying of the kite is most highly developed, and although the origins of kites are unclear, it is beyond doubt that Japan was one of the first countries where kites were flown.

There are many different shapes of Japanese kite; rectangular, geometric, and varied intricate shapes with rounded edges, particularly popular because of their bright decoration. Windbag kites have paper skins which are left loose from the frame to act like sails. Sode, or sleeve kites are based on the kimono shape and were made by fishermen who flew them before fishing trips and again on their return as thanksgiving. The decoration on these is very ornate, almost as ornate as on the ceremonial kimonos worn by the Japanese. Animal and insect designs are also popular, particularly with children. Many of these can be taken apart so that they are easy to transport. They are always bright and colourful and attract a great deal of attention when being flown.
To Western eyes, Japanese kites are a riot of colour and pattern, a great deal of time and

Sleeve kite



Mikawa hawk kite

effort usually having gone into their making. The Japanese view the decoration of kites as a serious art form. A kite maker named Kato said: 'A kite without a picture is ominous to the Japanese! An unpainted white surface reminds us of a funeral.'(5) To be beautiful, a kite must be pleasing to the eye and also must fly well.

Festivals and Ceremonies

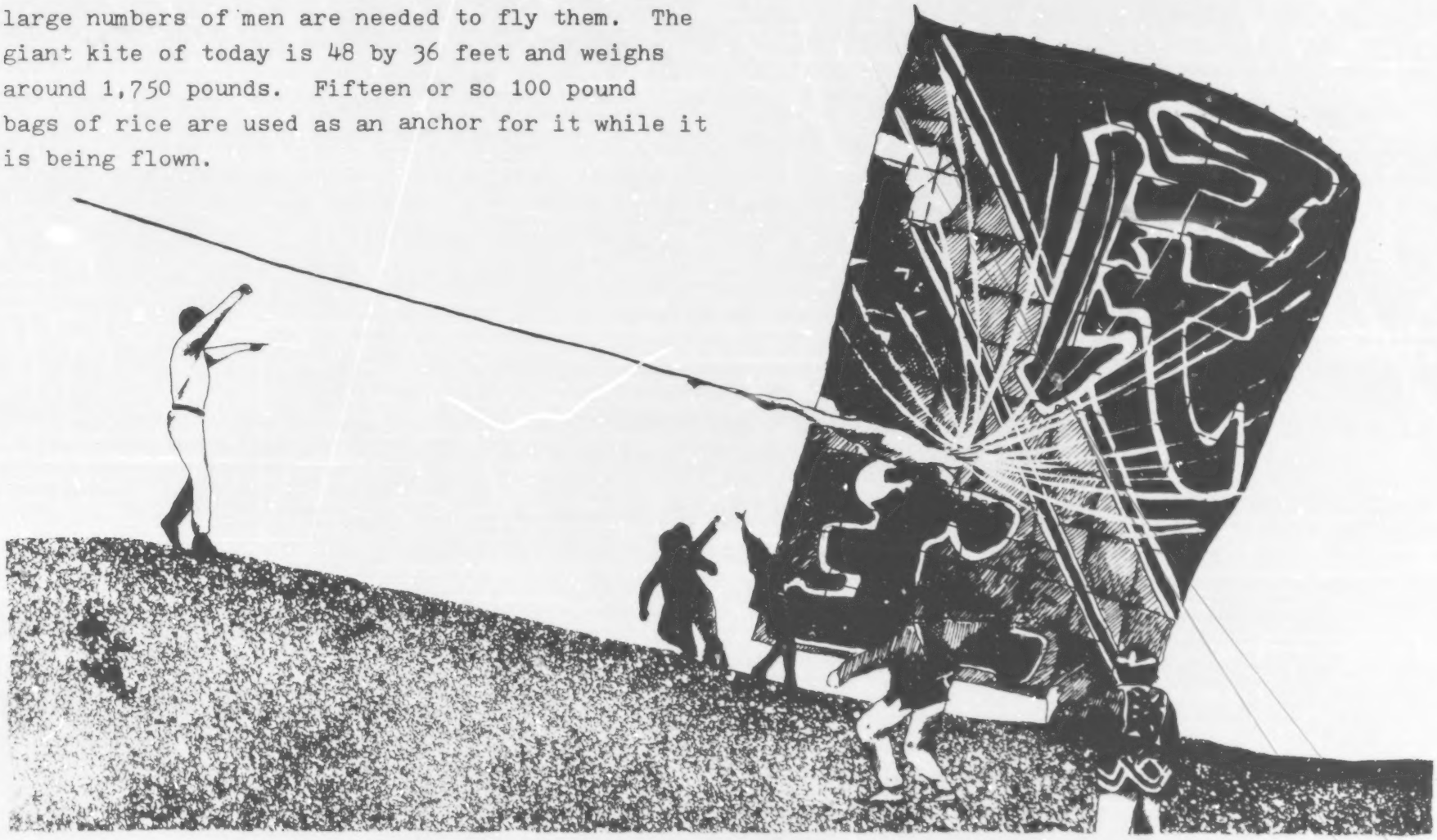
Kites are flown at set times of the year and have become associated with festivals and ceremonies because it was believed that they had the power to carry away bad luck. At New Year, kites are flown as a thanksgiving for the year gone, and as a symbol of hope for the year to come. These New Year kites often carry pictures of the crane, said to live for one hundred years, or of the tortoise, said to live for one thousand. At harvest time, freshly cut grain or rice is tied to the tail of the kite, which is then flown as an offering to the gods. Another important occasion is Boy's Festival on May 5th, when seven sided kites called Sagami and Suruga are flown as a charm against evil spirits to protect and guide boy children to adult life. These kites may bear portraits of the Golden Boy Kintaro, one of Japan's bravest heroes, and the carp, the symbol of strength and bravery.

These ceremonies were common in Japan until World War II, but now many are only practised in the mountain areas where western culture has not drastically affected the way of life.

Kintaro the Golden Boy, Boy's Festival kite

Giant Kites

Another popular event which attracts a great deal of attention in Japan is the flying of giant kites. These kites are of such vast proportions that large numbers of men are needed to fly them. The giant kite of today is 48 by 36 feet and weighs around 1,750 pounds. Fifteen or so 100 pound bags of rice are used as an anchor for it while it is being flown.



Because of the vast size of a giant kite, it has to be launched from a steep hillside, and once airborne, is very difficult to bring back to earth. For this reason it is extremely important that the kite flying team is well organised. The main bridle line is buried in the ground, and the hauling in is done by winch. This has to be done gradually or the kite may cut loose. There are many legends surrounding giant kites dating from ancient times when kites were used for signalling and warfare. It was reported that in 1712 the thief Kakinoki Kinsuke tied himself to a kite and flew from the roof of Nagoya Castle dungeon to steal the pure gold scales from the dolphin ornaments on the end of the ridge poles.(6) It is difficult to guess whether reports such as this one are true. The most reliable historical record of a giant kite dates back to the middle of the 19th century when a Wanwan kite was flown every year in the city of Naruto, which was large enough to carry a man, his wife and child. The Wanwan kite has been made in a variety of sizes, the largest one having been 20 metres in diameter. This would have weighed about 4500 kilos and would have needed between 150 and 200 men to fly it.

Giant kite measuring
6.7 x 5 metres

Kite Fighting

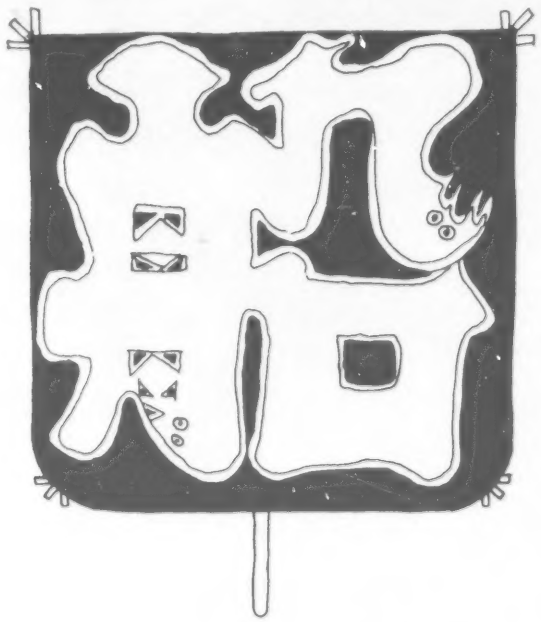
The Japanese have a special kite flying season when festivals are organised so that fliers can gather together for spectacular displays. One of the events which attracts the most attention is the kite fighting competition. Fighting kites can vary tremendously in size. The Nagasaki kite is by far the best for fighting as it has no tail and can fly in any direction at great speed. These kites tend to be small, no more than a metre long, and have a simple framework of two spars, a straight spine and a curved cross beam. The curved spar has to be perfectly symmetrical in order for the kite to be balanced and fly well. The Nagasaki kite is very similar to the Indian Fish Tail kite and it is thought that it was introduced by Dutch traders which might explain why it is decorated with bold flag-like designs in red white and blue.

Square fighting kites are flown at Hamamatsu and are so large at 2 to 3 metres across, that teams of men are needed to control them. They are usually adorned with decorative writing representing the name of the team.

Kite festivals are particularly well organised as kite fighting is a serious sport in which men of all ages participate. The aim of the competition is to keep the kite airborne and to bring down those of your opponents, so that yours is the last one in the air.

Fighting kites

The kite string is coated with glue and dipped into powdered glass or porcelain, sometimes a piece of bamboo has small curved blades pushed through it. As a kite string rubs against another, one will eventually be severed. The competition is fierce and can be very tiring, especially if the kites are large. It is regarded as important that at the end of the day there is no ill feeling between competitors, no matter how rough the contest has been.



Hamatsu Fighting Kite

The Making

Although the variety of Japanese kites is tremendous, about 130 different types and shapes, they tend all to belong to a particular district or region. Farmers may have one type of kite whilst fishermen and townspeople have others.

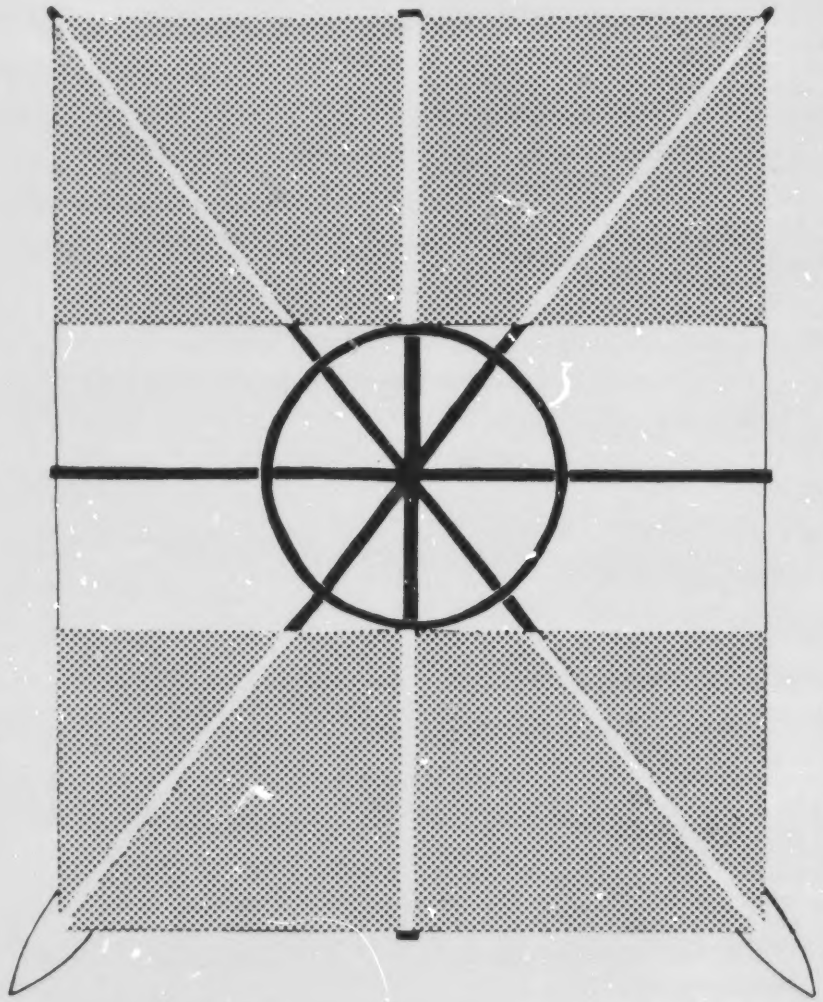
All Japanese kites are made of the same materials and are put together in the same way. The kite frame is made of split bamboo to which the paper skin is glued. The quality of the paper is very good since it is handmade to be strong and light. The designs are put onto the paper skin before it is stuck to the frame, they are either painted or printed from woodblocks. The glue is made from a mixture of flour and water which is boiled together until it becomes smooth, for easy spreading. Two types of string are needed for making the kite, the first is very fine and is used for tying the framework together before the skin is attached, the second is that used for the flying line, which traditionally is silk.

Because of the use of silk for the flying line, and the painstaking construction and decoration of the Japanese kite, kite flying can still be an expensive pastime despite its popularity.

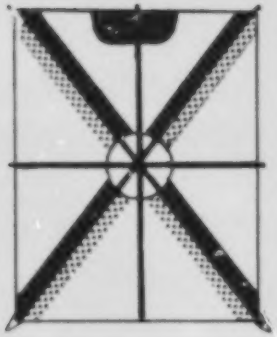
Korean Kites

Many Koreans believe that kites were invented in Korea during a period of war with Japan four hundred years ago. There is a legend that a general sent up a kite with a lantern attached to it in order to lift the spirits of his men who were upset by falling stars they thought to be bad omens. Another legend concerns a story of a general who used a kite to lodge a line in a tree so that he and his troops could cross a stream, and there are other stories about men being carried by kites. All the stories are either concerned with the use of kites in warfare or with very practical uses such as lifting tiles to the roof of a building. From this all we can glean is that the origins of the Korean kite are unsure.(7)

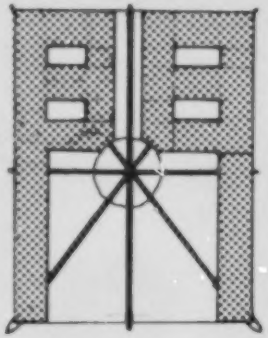
There are several shapes of kite found in Korea, but the simple rectangular design is regarded as 'the' Korean kite and by far out-numbers the kites of other shapes which are flown. It is an unusual kite as it has a hole in the centre which helps it balance in flight and allows it to manoeuvre when in the air. It also protects the kite from being damaged in strong winds. The two lower corners of the kite have triangular pieces of paper pasted to them, called crow's feet.



Korean kite

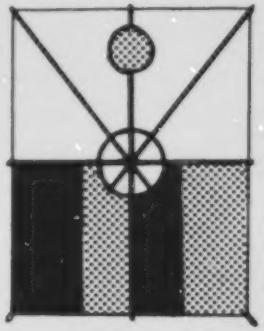


Hinge Kite

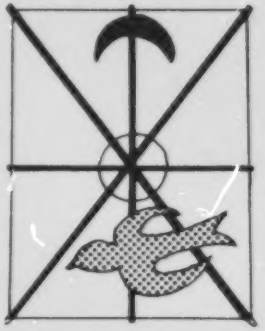


Gate Kite

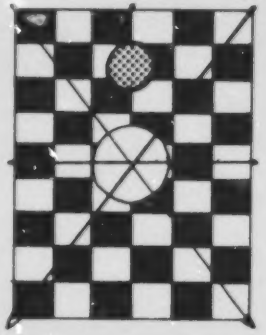
Butterfly Kite



Skirt Kite



Swallow Kite



'Go' Board Kite

The average size for a Korean kite is about 55cm high and 45cm wide, though it may be larger or smaller. The kites have bamboo frames and paper skins onto which coloured paper is stuck for decoration, or, a design may be painted. The five ribs which make up the kite are glued directly to the paper. The hole in the centre of the kite is one third of its length.

The decoration of the Korean kite is different from that of the Japanese. There are no representations of people, animals or birds on most of them, instead the patterns are simple, bold and flag-like and are made up of stripes, coloured geometric shapes and circles. There are several main types of decoration used on the rectangular kites; for example kites of the Chi-ma, or Skirt Kite group are coloured to produce an effect like the different colours in a woman's skirt. There are a few non-rectangular kites made and flown in Korea, such as the Magpie Wing Kite, the square Shield Kite and the Ray Kite which is more or less the same as the Japanese Nagasaki Hata fighting kite.

Kites are flown in Korea during a season which begins on the first day of the lunar calendar and lasts for fifteen days until the first full moon of the year. It is traditional for children to fly kites before this date so that the festival period is the climax. The sport is taken seriously and men and boys prepare their kites to withstand the rough contest. The flier may make his own kite, but usually they are made professionally.

The sites for kite flying have been established for generations, such as the bank of the Chong-gae-chon stream in Seoul, the capital of Korea. The contests attract a large number of enthusiastic cheering spectators. The competitors try to entangle the strings of their kites, each hoping to cut through all the other strings and bring the other kites crashing down. On the final day of the festival, a special kite is flown which wards off evil traditionally. This is called Aeg-ma-gi-yon or Song-aeg-yon. It is an ordinary rectangular kite but it bears the words 'bad luck away and good luck to stay'. The kite is flown as high as possible then it is cut free to carry the owners bad luck far away so that the year will be a good one.

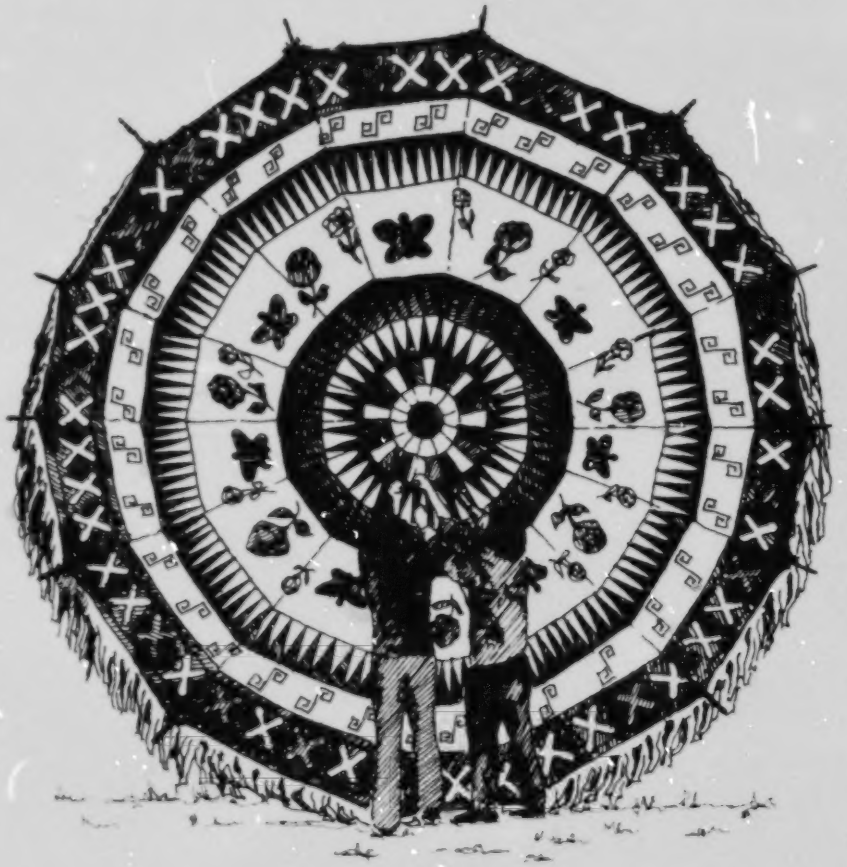
Guatemalan Kites

Kites for one day of the year

Sacatepequez is a small village in Santiago, a province of Guatemala, South America. Here the Cachiquel Indians make giant kites which, unlike kites from Japan, Korea and the Pacific Islands, are not made to be good fliers. Instead they are flown on just one day of the year, November 1st, which is All Saints Day.

The kites range in size from 5 to as much as 10 metres across. They have bamboo frames and paper skins made up from hundreds and hundreds of small clippings glued together in colourful patterns. The kites take six to eight weeks to make, the maker starts with a small circle of paper and pastes clippings around this, the pattern grows outwards as the layers of clippings are added. Different coloured papers are used for each ring, so that the kites are very bright and colourful, highly patterned and eyecatching. Pictures may also be stuck onto them, usually of butterflies and birds, a fringe is put around the edge made of shredded paper.

On the morning of All Saints Day the women of the village go to the graveyard which is



Guatemalan kite

situated away from their homes on a hillside. They scatter Marigold leaves (for the dead) over the tombs and graves. The men who have made the kite skins take them from their houses into the open to be placed over the bamboo frames. Small flags are tied to the spars at what is to be the top of the kite. The road from the village to the cemetery is lined with villagers and visitors as the procession of men carrying the kites winds its way up the hillside. By this time it is early afternoon and a breeze begins to blow across the valley.

The kites are rested against the fence at the lower end of the cemetery as the bridle lines are attached. The kites are not launched in the conventional way, instead they are stood upright and when the wind becomes strong enough it carries them upwards. Some of the kites are carried off above the mountain by strong gusts of wind, but most only travel a few metres or crash to the ground in the adjoining corn fields, some break up in the air. When they are brought down to earth again, the skins are torn off and burned and bamboo frames kept for the following year.

101

Preparing the kite for flight

102

Kites of South East Asia

Fishing Kites

Kite fishing is practised in two areas of South East Asia: in Indonesia to the west of New Guinea which includes Singapore and Java; and in Melanesia to the east of New Guinea which includes the Moluccas and the Banda Islands, but excludes Borneo, the Celebes and other islands lying in the direction of Australia.

This fishing method is confined to smooth waters with just a little breeze. When these conditions do not prevail other types of line are used from canoes. As well as kites, lines, troll, rod and line and a net and frame are used.

Gar-fish

Kites are used to catch a particular kind of fish. The gar-fish has a jaw so narrow that it cannot take in a normal fish-hook. Another method had to be developed to catch the fish. The fisherman works from an outrigger canoe using a kite to trail a baited line along the surface of the water. He will hold the line between his teeth, leaving both hands free to paddle his canoe.

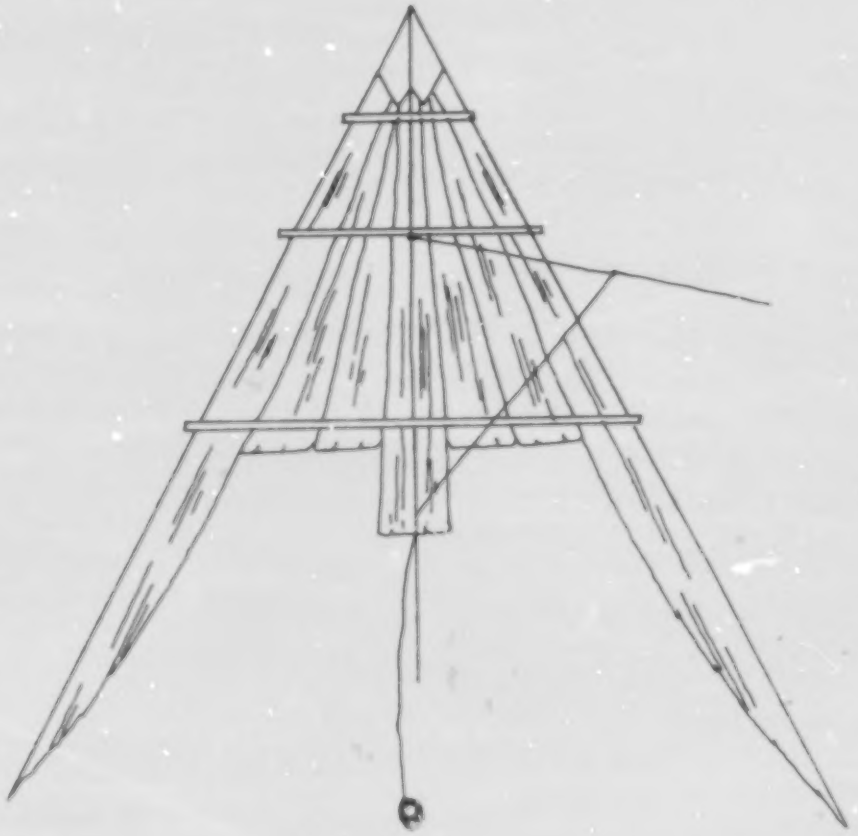
The kites consist of a bamboo rod with a ring at its tip through which the fishing line passes. The kite is attached to the other end of the line. The usual kite-tail is replaced by another line at the end of which is a tangled loop. In Indonesia this loop is made from fibre or metal wire and in Melanesia a strong spider's web is used. When the fish bites, its jaw becomes entangled in the loop and the fisherman can then haul in the line.

The kites are made from the leaves of the Sago Palm or of the Epiphytic Fern. These are folded and sewn together, and thin cane is used for spars which are pushed through the leaves to strengthen the kite. The edges are bound with leaves to keep the kite intact. Kites may vary considerably in size, but the average is one metre long and sixty centimetres across the top part of the body. The twine used for sewing and for the kite string is made of natural string fibre.

They are used as functional objects and are not decorated, but this does not mean that they are not regarded as important. They are treated in a special way when newly made as the makers believe that otherwise they will not be able to catch fish

with them. In consequence there is a special ceremony for new kites. The kite maker gathers the root of the Sil plant. He chews this along with the areca-nut and the mixture is spat onto the part of the fishing line which will hold the bait. He puts the line into the water and recites 'Seo, Nikniko, boto var vavatoa.'(8) Seo and Nikniko are the two kinds of gar-fish, the fisherman is asking them to 'take the line and shake it'. It is only when this is done that the kite can be used for fishing with.

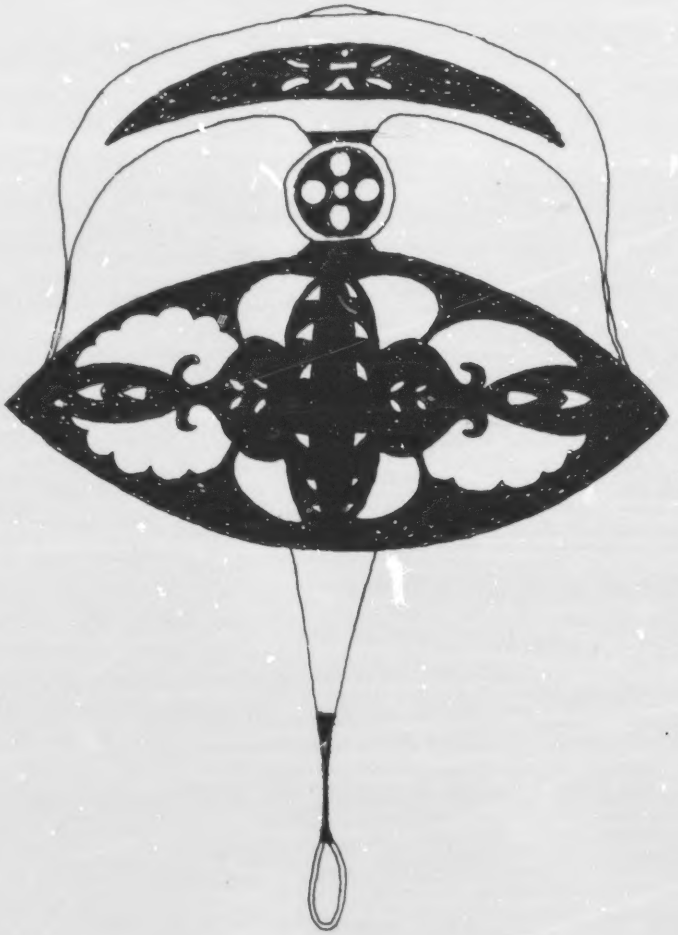
The first ten fish caught with the new kite must be brought ashore and the fisherman must not give them away to anyone, if asked to do so he will say: 'I can't give you any because I want to cook my new kite. If you want to eat you can come to my house'(9). He builds a fire, cooks the fish a and eats them. A dog must not eat any, even the smallest amount, as this will mean that sharks will eat the fish before they reach the bait. At the end of the meal all the scraps and bones are burned. Another way of ensuring that the catch will be good is by the fisherman rubbing his hands with the leaves of the Karininoa plant. The leaves are then put into a coconut shell along with some sea water, and placed in the canoe. The root of the same plant is then chewed and spat onto the kite string. When a fish is caught a little of the mixture is put into the fish's mouth and it is thrown back, this is believed to attract other fish to the bait.



Fishing kite from Buka, a state of New Guinea

Malaysian Kites

Kites in Malaysia have recreational as well as practical uses. Since the introduction of paper in the 16th century, kite designs have multiplied so that now many different shapes and sizes of kite are flown. Amongst the various types are animal kites, human figure kites (man sized), and most famously the Wau Bulan, or moon kite. This can be as large as 10 feet tall with both oval and crescent shaped sails. The upper crescent sail is aerodynamically effective and allows the kite to move through the air very easily. It is therefore usually used as a fighting kite. Competitions with these kites are very popular, often taking place between village teams in the late afternoon through to sunset. They are well supported events and people place bets on the outcome of the matches. There is a competition for the highest flown kite, for the kite most skilfully handled and the most beautifully decorated.

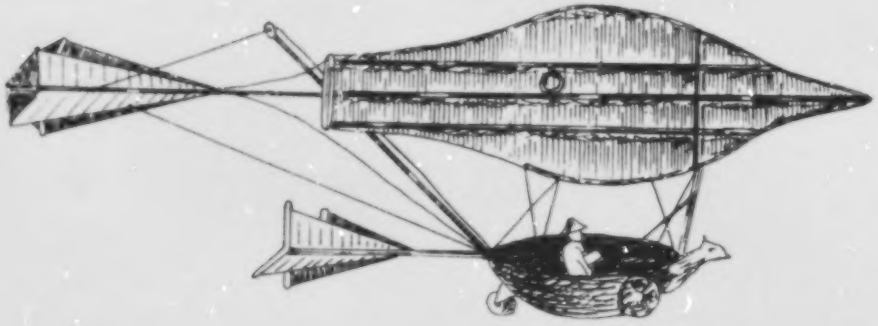


Wau Bulan or Moon kite

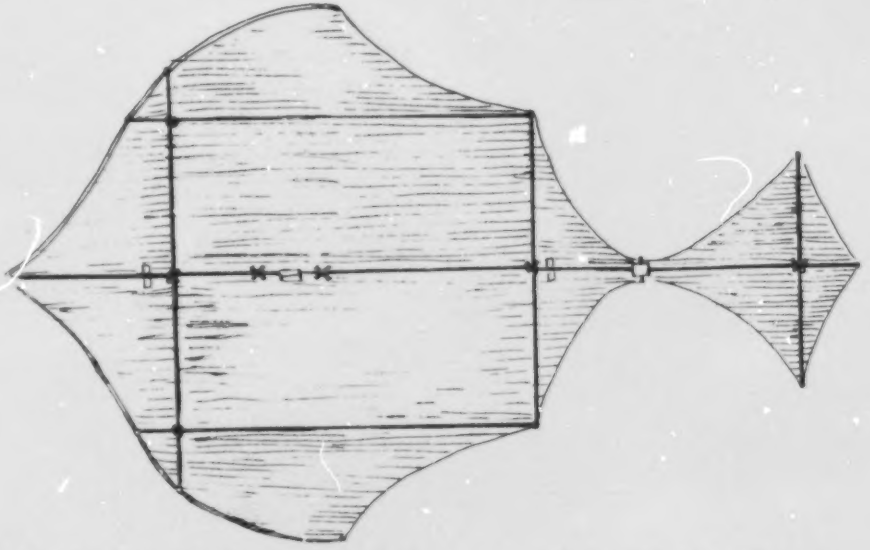
Kites and Science

In Europe, kite flying was not regarded as a serious activity until the 18th and 19th centuries when experiments into the possible scientific uses of kites were carried out.

Alexander Wilson, a Scot, carried out an experiment in 1749. He flew a series of six kites, tied together one above the other to a height of 900 metres, each of the kites had a thermometer attached to it and Wilson was able to record the air temperature at different altitudes. In America, Benjamin Franklin proved that lightning and generated electricity were the same, in his experiment of 1752 when he used a kite line to conduct electricity during a thunderstorm.



It was in the 19th century that scientists and inventors seriously began to use kites in a non-recreational way. Sir George Cayley worked on perfecting man-carrying kites between 1799 and 1809, modelling them on arch-top kites. His work was very important to the future development of gliders. In 1853 he flew his coachman across the Yorkshire Dales in a man carrying glider, following this the coachman resigned his post saying that he had been employed to drive and not to fly.(10)



Cayley's design for a man-carrying glider which he called a 'governable parachute'.

The Australian, Lawrence Hargrave was not successful in providing a solution for the man-carrying kite, but in the process he did invent the box kite. His cell like structures were very strong and stable and could be flown at very high altitudes. His kite was the prototype for many other kite designs and he would not patent his idea as he wanted people to be able to experiment freely.

Alexander Graham Bell, the inventor of the telephone, constructed his own cell kite. One of these was so effective that it lifted one of his helpers 9 metres into the air. The kites were covered in silk sail cloth and were designed in such a way that the structure could be altered in size by multiplying the units. The kites look rather like mathematical models, but they fly well and are very strong. Bell's tetrahedral kite is probably the most widely used of his models.

Samuel Franklin Cody of the American entertainment family, based his design for a man-carrying kite on Hargraves work. He flew up to five kites in a train with a wicker chair suspended below a sixth kite which controlled the other five. By doing

Man-carrying kite

this he had complete control of the kites and was able to move his seat along the cable in order to alter his position. He persuaded the War Office to take his proposals seriously and use them for military observation purposes, they were very successful until the aeroplane was perfected and took their place.

Cody's experiments did not stop there, and in 1903 he crossed the English Channel in a rowing boat which was towed by kites. He also experimented with powered kites in 1908 and built the first powered aeroplane in England which was basically a powered kite. His kites were very successful man lifters because their braced construction meant that the balance between the lifting and stabilising surfaces made them very suitable for lifting heavy weights. The famous Wright brothers who were the first people to fly and build the first successful aeroplane, worked with box kite structures for the wings of their bi-planes. They also used kites in order to perfect the glider design.

It was not only in the field of aviation that kites were put to use, in the study of weather and atmospheric conditions they proved to be

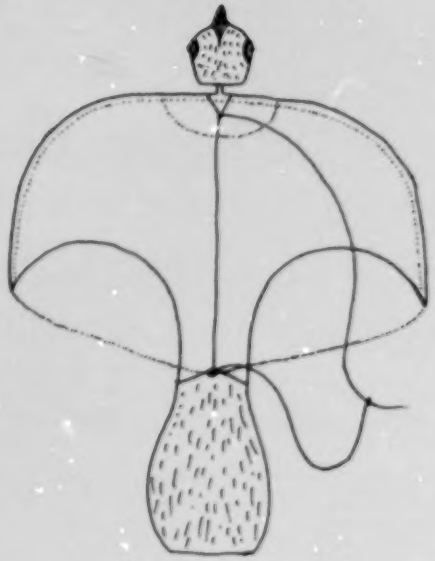
extremely useful. The camera had been developed to such an extent that it was possible to attach one to a kite in order to take photographs of the sky and cloud formations. William A Eddy pioneered this work in America. He would tie up to 18 kites in a train formation and his experiments were quite a triumph, however, the kites were apt to break free and he would have to chase them across the countryside in order to recover them. Gilbert Woglam and Guglielmo Marconi also took aerial photographs using kites.

George Pocock patented the 'Char Volant' in 1862, this was a carriage which was drawn by kites rather than a horse. It required the use of two kites, operated by four lines which could be controlled horizontally and vertically so that the carriage could move no matter in which direction the wind was blowing. Although his idea did not catch on, there are records which state that he used his vehicle extensively in the Bristol area.(13)

The notion of using kites to tow vehicles was not new, Portuguese fishermen had been using kites to tow their boats out to sea from sheltered harbours for many years.

Captain George Nares and the Frenchman C. Jobert worked on kites for rescuing people at sea. Captain Nares designed the winning entry for a competition for a life saving device run by the Daily Graphic in 1861. Jobert perfected a life saving kite in 1887 which could carry a line from ship to shore, it was quite stable in high winds and could even carry a signalling lamp and a siren for use in foggy conditions or at night.

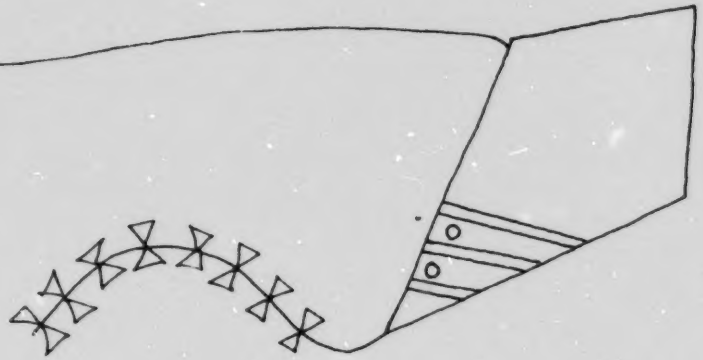
Probably the earliest kite to be used for military purposes in the West was that of Admiral Sir John Cochrane who devised a kite to drop torpedoes during the Russian War of 1855. His kites were 3.66 metres long and could accurately tow a torpedo very quickly to a target two miles away. The Germans used kites for observation purposes in the First World War, they flew men-carrying devices from submarines and therefore could see for many miles around. Kites were used for gunnery targets and the US Navy flew kites as barrage protection for convoys of ships. These were based on Hargrave's kites. They were used for carrying aerials and in 1939 a spy was arrested for transmitting coded messages to the Nazis by attaching automatic signalling equipment to one of them.(11)



I. K. Rogers collapsible hunting kite of 1884

In the 17th and 18th centuries, hunting was an important pastime for the rich in England. A Mr Condell used a paper kite to imitate the Kite (a bird); this was for flushing out game when shooting. A Mr W.G. Trebileck flies his kite from the 40 metre high Edistone light house to catch fish and pass down mail and small parcels to the supply boat.(12)

Kite Songs



Kites from the Islands of the Pacific Ocean had a great deal of religious significance. There are many stories of kites being used as a means of contacting the gods in the heavens. The kite represented the soul of the flier and legends tell how men reached the heavens in this form. From these legends originate kite songs, found throughout the Pacific Islands[14].

A song telling Tawhaki, a man who reached the heavens in kite form, to be brave on his journey:

'Cling, cling, like a lizard, to the ceiling.
Stick, stick close to the side of heaven.'

A Maori song about Tawhaki:

'The rainbow was the path of Kaha'i (Tawhaki)
Kaha'i climbed, Kaha'i strove...
Kaha'i mounted on the flashing rays of light,
Flashing on men and canoes...
Pass over the dark blue ocean
And shake the foundation of heaven.'

A Maori kite song:

'Climb up, climb up,
To the highest surface of heaven,
To all the sides of heaven.
Climb then to thy ancestor,
The sacred bird in the sky,
To thy ancestor Rehua
In the moon.'

A Hawaiian Kite song:

'Wind! Wherever you may abide,
wherever you may abide,
Wind! Come hither, pray take my kite away
from me afar.
E-u! E-u! Wind! Blow strong and steady,
blow and come forth,
Oh wind!'

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Sound Making Objects

Researched and written by Roy Upson; illustrated, designed and produced by Roy Upson, Julie Davies, Kathryn Hemmings and Yvonne Brierley.

ETHNOGRAPHIC RESOURCES FOR ART EDUCATION

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CONTENTS

Introduction..... 1

Rattling Objects..... 2

Air Objects..... 11

Plucked Objects..... 21

Beaten Objects..... 26

References..... 35

Bibliography..... 36

Selected Discography..... 38

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank the following for their generous assistance in the compilation of this resource book:

The City of Birmingham Central Library,

Birmingham Polytechnic Libraries,

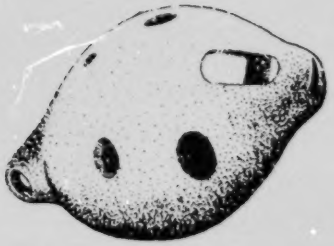
Dr. Schyler Jones of the Pitt Rivers Museum,

Graham Leech of the Museum of Mankind,

Elizabeth Goodhew of the Horniman Museum,

Lucy Duran of the British Institute of Recorded Sound.

Introduction



There are as many different kinds of musical instruments as there are forms of musical expression. The instruments in this section are organised according to the action or property required to sound them, into rattling objects, air objects, plucked objects, and beaten objects. Each category contains a very varied assortment; a drum can be a simple cavity in the ground or orchestral timpani, yet the two are sounded in very much the same manner.

Since the Renaissance, European music has seemed to become a very individual means of expression. In contrast, in the cultures of Africa, the Americas and Oceania for example, art in nearly all its forms expresses a view of life in which man, far from being the central figure, is an extremely insignificant element.

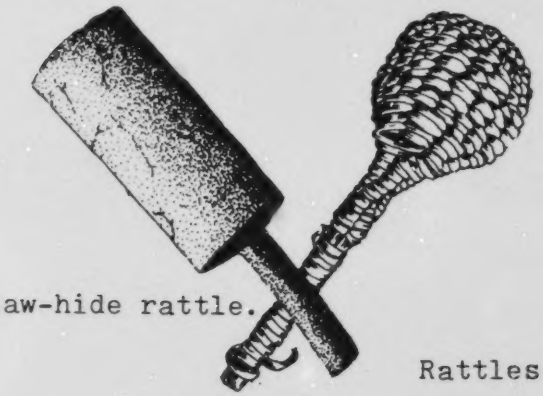
This study makes reference to a wide range of instruments, illustrating their significance in relation to a variety of cultures.

Rattling Objects

Gourd Rattles

A gourd is a melon-like fruit with a hard skin which is full of pulp. There are a number of varieties all belonging to the cucurbitaceae family. In order to make a gourd rattle the pulp has to be removed making the gourd hollow and allowing rattling objects to be inserted. It may be left out in the sun until its contents dry and shrivel. The pulp can then be easily removed and the shell washed out and dried further.

The rattle is found in many parts of the world including North, Central and South America, Africa - especially in western regions,- Indonesia and Oceania. In areas where gourds do not grow their shape is often imitated in clay, wood, basketwork, metal and even leather.



Raw-hide rattle.

Rattles of basketry.

There are two major types of gourd rattle. Some have natural handles and an elongated shape and are frequently formed into rattles in such African countries as Mali, Ghana and Nigeria They are filled with seeds and serve as instruments in many types of ceremonial rites. They also play an important role as rhythm makers for dancing.

Gourd rattle, Nigeria.

In Sierra Leone this type of rattle is partly covered with a network of dried fruit seeds threaded onto a mesh of cord. One hand grips the gourd tightly by the handle while the other holds the ends of the cords taut to agitate the seeds.

Gourd rattle, sierra Leone.

South American Gourd Rattle

Another type of gourd rattle which is used extensively in South America consists of a spherical or egg-shaped gourd which is pierced by a wooden rod serving as a handle. Usually only one gourd is used, however in coastal areas of Peru, for example, two gourds have been used, one on top of the other.

The rattling contents of most of these gourd rattles are usually one of or a mixture of stones, shells, seeds, pulses, glass beads or lead shot.

The gourd rattle or maraca is a common feature of South America. It is hard to locate these rattles in terms of either geography or social custom. This is because a great deal of the information available has an historical bias as it is based on the observations of the early explorers of the continent. Many of the names of the tribes, districts and peoples have changed. South America is also an area of very contrasting landscapes, with diverse peoples existing in tropical rain forest, savannah lands, mountainous areas and coastal regions.

For centuries South and Central America has witnessed many sorts of wars and conflicts, and in most regions one people after another has dominated the land. When the Spaniards, under the command of Cortez, invaded Mexico in the early 16th century, they found the Aztecs under the rule of King Montezuma.

Another complex society, that of the Incas, had developed in Peru. H.G.Stafford maintains that (1) that this civilisation had begun c.2,500 BC as an agricultural society based on the growing of maize. At this time the small agricultural village was the centre of the community. Then

South America

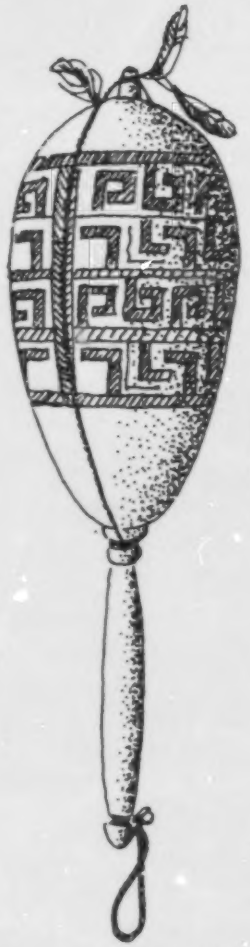
between 1 AD and 1,000 AD the Incas began to build elaborate temples and elegant palaces and incorporated metallurgy, and also agricultural techniques such as terracing and irrigation. The Empire of the Incas covered Peru and spread into what is now Ecuador , Columbia, Bolivia, north-west Argentina and northern Chile. The conquests and expansion, however, were halted by the invasion of the Spaniards in 1536.

Much of the southern half of the continent was populated by nomadic peoples. Their economy was varied depending on where they lived and included fishing, hunting, and farming. Central to the life of the nomads was the belief that their welfare depended upon an ability to control a vast number of supernatural powers. It was thought that these powers could enter and inhabit living things - animal life, including man, and plant life, including gourds.

Among the Chaco Indians, who inhabit an area which is now mainly Paraguay, the gourd rattle is an instrument of extreme magical power. This is partly due to the belief in the presence of the supernatural in the fruit, and partly due to the seeds or other materials used to fill the empty gourd, which presumably are also permeated by these powers. The magical qualities of these rattles are further enhanced by the geometric figures decorating the gourds.

These tribes make use of the rattle both to frighten away evil spirits and to obtain something that they desire. For example, it is shaken at marriage and courtship dances by men who are despised by girls, in order to achieve greater success in love.

When Algoroba beans or other wild fruits are being gathered by women for the brewing of a sacred beer, husbands and other elder men sit at home and shake gourd rattles to ensure good luck for this activity. The preparation of fermented drinks is an important occasion when both the gourd rattle and the drum is used in many South American societies.



Apinaye Rattle

Tukano rattles

We cannot be sure of the beliefs lying behind such customs, but it is thought by some experts that these Indians mean to frighten away the evil spirits that could impede the success of important issues. The power of this magical instrument is believed to be a direct and mysterious influence upon natural processes and even on the thoughts and feelings of man himself.

The use of the gourd rattle across much of the continent is varied. Both in Brazil, especially among the Bororo people, and in Guiana, where many of the groups have long been agricultural/manioc growing communities, the rattle is used in burial rites. Here it has been customary to decorate the rattles with feathers. In Guiana these feathers must not only be plucked from a special and rare parrot but they must be plucked while the bird is still alive. Indian tribes in Northern Brazil wind beautifully bright red, green and blue string around the rattles along with the bright feathers of the kalon, a large Amazonian parrot, which is believed to possess a mystical charm.

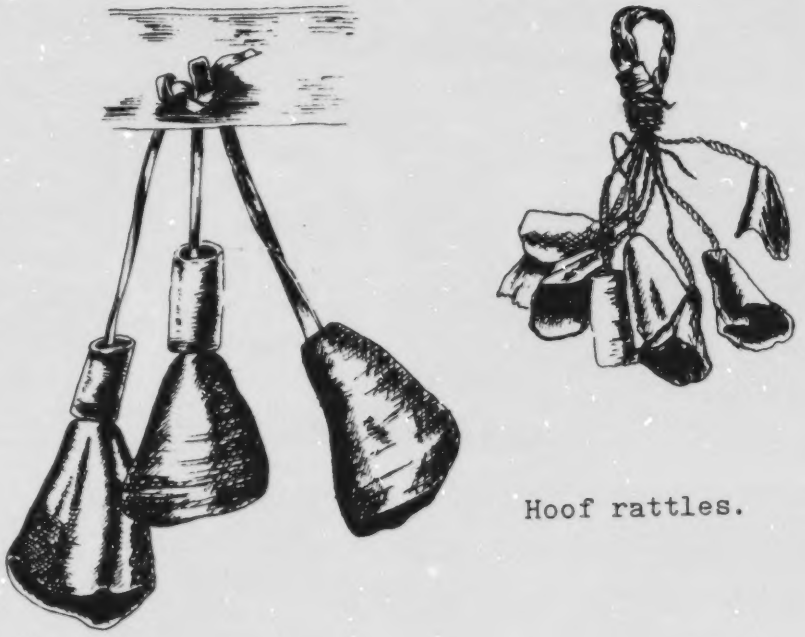
Generally, the gourd rattle is the tool of the shaman, a sort of witch doctor or medicine-man. The shaman of the Arowak Indians of Guiana conjures up evil spirits in the night by blowing smoke onto the rattle as it is shaken and singing at the same time. A different function is found among the Conibo of Peru. Rattles are played at the circumcision ceremony for girls which takes place at the first signs of puberty, their function being to ward off evil spirits. In many other regions the rattle plays an important part in exorcising illnesses. This is also so in many southern parts of North America among the Sioux, Teton, Chippewa and Papago tribes.

Bororo rattle.

Jingle Rattles

Jingle rattles consist of a number of small objects loosely attached together so as to clash against each other when shaken. The invention was presumably easily made as there is little difference between this instrument and a decorative necklace.

The objects may consist of a number of different materials such as hooves, fruit shells, conch shells, pieces of reed, bone or metal, and are fastened along some sort of string or band. They form instruments that may be fastened to the body, around the knee or arm for example, or may be attached to a staff. They can also simply be held in the hand. Sometimes these rattling objects are tied directly onto the clothing or hair.



Hoof rattles.

Jingle Rattles made of Hoof

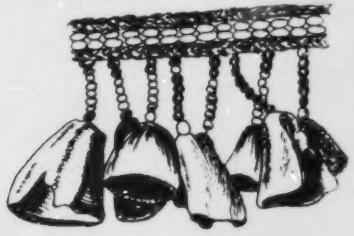
Hoof rattles are widely scattered across South America, particulary among hunting people, and and can be seen as far north as among the native American tribes of California.

Among the nomadic peoples of South America the rattles are often used at ceremonies on the occasion of a girl's first menstruation. These ceremonies are celebrated with a dance commonly known as the Kausima, named after the instrument that the women use for it - a hoof rattle called Kahuis. It consists of a staff 2 or 3 metres in length made of a light kind of wood or bamboo at the top of which are tied bunches of deer hooves. This instrument produces a hollow sort of sound when shaken or struck against the ground and is believed by many of the nomads to have a power over evil spirits.

"The dance begins at the first new moon following the signs of puberty. The moon is believed to have a great influence on the menstruation of women. The dance ceremony is performed every day until the following new moon. The girl's mother and elderly women form a circle, each holding her rattling staff. Close to the ring stand four shamen holding gourd rattles. During the dance the women move around with slow regular steps, chanting loudly and marking time with their hoof rattles, whilst men in the background provide steady drum beats.

The girl in whose honour the ceremony was being performed was standing aside motioneless and silent and remained so throughout the whole of the proceedings.

The object of this and similar ceremonies is to protect the girl from evil spirits by which she is believed to be particularly vulnerable to attack whilst in this unclean condition." (2).



Apinaye hoof rattle.

The hoof rattle in South America is connected in many instances with rites for adolescent girls. We may presume, because of its wide distribution, that this object is a very old sound instrument.

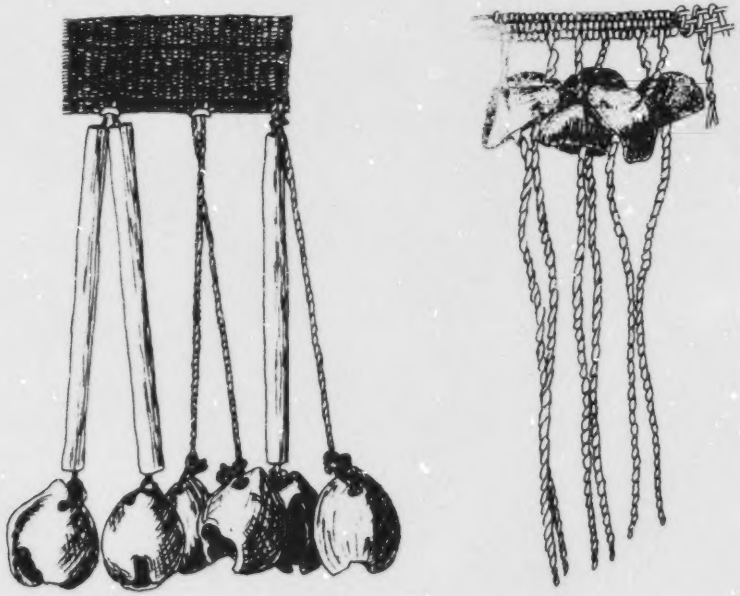
It occurs largely among well established hunting people who were in existence long before the agricultural societies.

Among many of these hunters the deer is also considered a creature of mysterious female qualities. The anthropologist Izikowitz tells us of one myth where the Toba tribe escaped a great world fire through a large hole in the ground (3). When they were about to leave, a sorcerer told them that they must cover up their eyes. If any of them failed to do this they would be changed into an animal. Deers are believed to be the reincarnated souls of women, their noiseless movements and the speed with which they disappear into the forest suggesting to many the idea of ghosts. Some hunting tribes, therefore, never eat deer meat, believing that if they did so they would certainly die.

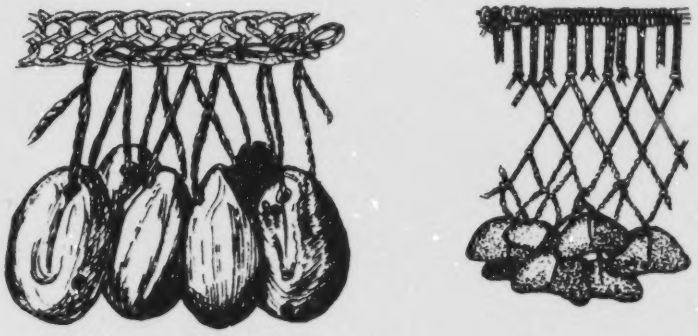
Izikowitz has suggested that of all these instruments the hoof rattle is probably the oldest in South America and that it originated with hunting people. At first it was probably an amulet used during hunting and possibly became connected with the ceremonies for adolescent girls so as to ensure that her male children became good hunters.

Jingle Rattles made of Fruit Shell

These rattles do not have the same use as those made of deer hoof and they are to be found mainly among agricultural peoples. In the Grand Chaco they are used mostly at ceremonies of dancing feasts, occuring when there is an abundance of food and drink. The food may consist of bread, fish or manioc, a tropical plant from which tapioca is prepared. The beverage, however, appears to have been the same in all areas. A beer called kashiri is another product made from manioc.



Fruit shell rattles



Fruit shell rattles of the Mauhe.

Little by little some societies went through a change in their culture. The basis of their economy changed from game-hunting to agriculture. As a result the rattling objects on these instruments changed from hoof to fruit shell etc. But there was little reason to change the manner in which they were worn and the way they were put together. At this stage any material capable of producing a sound was considered suitable - such as fruit, snail or mussel shells, especially as they occured in greater quantities than the deer hoof. The rattles were used in agricultural ceremonies and festivals, at harvest-time for instance.

Tubular Rattles

The majority of these rattles are usually made of bamboo. They are closed at both ends and are filled with hard seeds, pebbles or stones. Some have an interesting detail in that a large number of palm needles are stuck through the walls of the rattle. These needles are of a length equal to that of the diameter of the tube and thus reach from one side to the other. In turning the rattle upside-down, the seeds beat gainst the needles producing a sound like the patter of rain.

These particular tubular rattles have also been found among scattered tribes of northern Mexico. Among many of these tribes the rattle was considered to be an attribute of Xipe, the god of fertility. Rain to these agricultural people was of vital importance and understandably a symbol of fertility. Considered this way one can understand that this rattle was an instrument used for sowing purposes as sowing is dependent on the fetilizing rain.

According to musicologist Curt Sachs, tubular rattles with needles are found especially in the West African country of Togo, which is precisely the region from which negro slaves were brought to America. It is also known that many South

American people who used these instruments had been in intimate contact with these negroes and are also said to possess drums of the kind used in this region of Africa.

In Togo the needles, or nails in this case, have a technical use which explains their existence. The rattle was made by cleaving the tube lengthways, after which it was nailed back together. It is likely that these tubular rattles were in existence before the arrival of the Africans, but anthropologists suspect that the South Americans modified their own type to incorporate this new sound. A number of gourd rattles also have this detail of palm needles which likewise could have been influenced by the African slaves.

Tubular rattle.

The Bull-Roarer

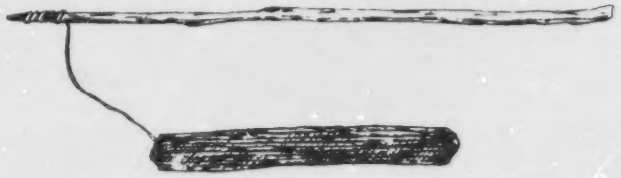
The bull-roarer is a thin, rhomboid-shaped piece of wood which is frequently, but not always, carved. A hole is pierced in one end for attaching a length of cord. The free end of the cord is either held in the hand or tied to a stick which is then held. The bull-roarer is whirled through the air in circles. The speed and the size of the rhombus determines the sound it emits. For example, the smaller the bull-roarer, the faster it spins and consequently the noise is of a higher pitch.

The bull-roarer is a sound object in the true sense of the word for in no culture does it take part in the making of music. But because of its close connection with ritual and mystical ceremony it has been chiefly studied by ethnologists and anthropologists and its place in books on musical instruments has been justified on the grounds that its behaviour is similar to that of a reed instrument, the clarinet for example.

Beliefs surrounding the bull-roarer vary and the historian A.C.Haddon has brought to our attention a list of the uses he has found for the bull-roarer in many countries. (4). These include:-

-as sacred objects in religious ceremonies.
-in initiation ceremonies.
-to frighten away spirits.
-as the voice of a god.
-as the voice of ancestors.
-for producing rain, thunder, lightning, wind.
-as a toy.

Haddon suspects that the bull-roarer is the most widepread and ancient of religious symbols in the world.



Bull-roarer, North America.

For thousands of years the bull-roarer has been a symbol of fertility and has often been shaped in the form of a fish. The fish is believed by many to be a highly fertile creature (particularly so in some South American communities), due to the plentiful roe that it carries. In parts of South America the bull-roarer is painted with a red pigment and a black resin which we may presume had a magical significance since there have been only two objects coloured in this manner - the bull-roarers and a special type of palm strip given to young men at initiation ceremonies.

The bull-roarer is common among the Maori people of New Zealand. It is known by a variety of names including purorohu, rangorango, wherrooro and others. It is usually made from a hard wood about 30cm. - 45cm. in length and in an elongated oval shape.

Elsdon Best observes that many of the Maori people believe the sound of the bull-roarer is caused by the 'wairra' or soul of the operator though the reasons for this belief are not at all clear. (5).

The object is used by some communities in rain ceremonies. When rain is needed for crops a respected member of the village 'demands' rain during the evening and night. He leaves the village with a bull-roarer and a handful of ashes, and throwing the ashes to the south (the rainy quarter) he begins to make the instrument sound. At the same time he turns his back to the south in an insulting manner, hoping to produce a storm. Many Maoris believe that this is the only way that they will acquire rain. If children sound the bull-roarer during play they will be scorned for attempting to summon up a rain storm when it is not needed. It seems from the information available that amongst the Maoris the bull-roarer is not generally used as a toy but primarily as a ceremonial object.

Maori bull-roarers.

West Africa

To many children in various regions of West Africa the bull-roarer is said to represent the roaring of the panther. This animal is greatly feared by adults and they are not generally pleased to be reminded of it by children spinning the bull-roarer playfully.

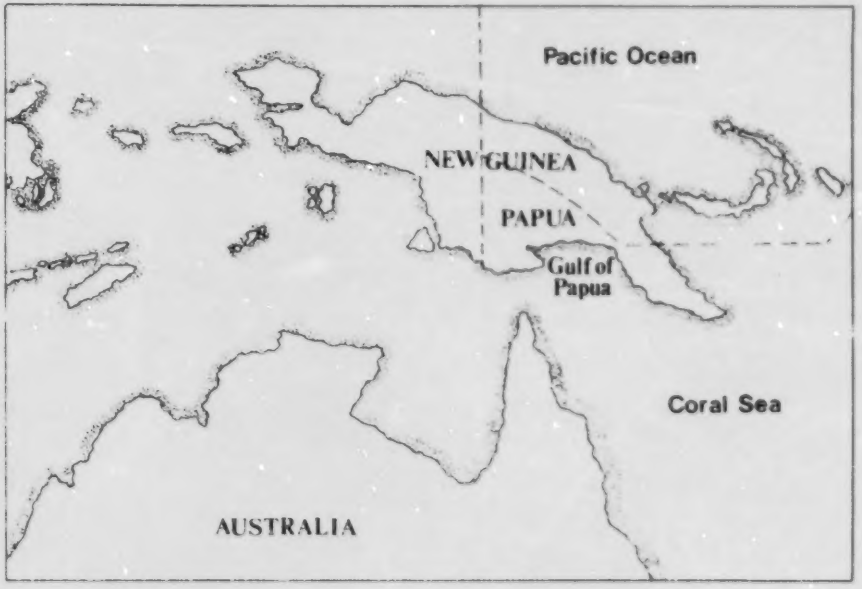
In certain West African societies, such as the Dogon of Mali, the sound of the bull-roarer signals the end of a funeral rite that terminates a period of mourning. On these occasions masks are worn by men. The ceremony begins at night when the bull-roarer is used to warn women and children that they must disappear, for they are not permitted to see the masks. The instrument continues to sound all night leading the procession of masks around the village.

Papua New Guinea

Much has been written about the bull-roarer's existence in the Papuan Gulf area of New Guinea, and especially among the Elema people who live along the coastline.

It is only this century that Papua has become well known, yet even today areas are still totally unexplored. Papua has an extremely hot and moist climate, similar to that of Amazonian South America, with an average yearly temperature of 27°C and heavy rainfall between May and September. Tropical rainforest covers nearly the whole of the country and due to its density the main form of transport is by river.

Agriculture is on a small scale with the growing of roots such as taro, yams, manioc and sweet potatoes. The cultivation of rubber has long been established but labour shortages have been a great obstacle to the expansion of output.



People of Papua

Across Papua there exist three types of people: Negritos, whose communities have developed very slowly and who include a number of people of Pigmy stature; and Papuans and Melanesians all of whom have intermixed a great deal.

Social organisations vary from small nomadic groups to very large tribes. The tribal peoples possess considerable skills in building and in the arts and crafts. A typical Papuan village consists of thatched timber huts hidden behind trees and usually near a river. River transport is a crucial means of transport as there are very few roads and no railways at all. The people make canoes for this purpose by hollowing out tree trunks. The village is traditionally dominated by a large building called the dubu, a ceremonial clubhouse from which women are excluded. Here men spend a great deal of their time, especially in the elaborate ceremonies of a boy's initiation into manhood.

There is a general belief, as in many other cultures, in good and bad spirits and there is reason to believe that cannibalism and headhunting have not been totally supressed.

Elema elder with bull-roarers and masks.

The Elema

The Elema of Papua have a number of beliefs connected with the bull-roarer. If a particular area were to be closely observed we would find not

just one myth but a number of interrelated myths. Knowledge of these is very unevenly spread throughout the people. They are closely connected with magical influences and information is owned and handed from one individual to another in private. Most of the myths surrounding the bull-roarer are communicated in the form of very long stories. However, F.E.Williams relates a simplified example that was passed onto him while working in the area.

> "A shy man named Hare (the sun) made models of a man and a woman in the sand at Popo (a village now some miles inland). Later he looked down and spoke to the models, whereupon they arose as real human beings. They mated and the woman gave birth to a bull-roarer. It was a thing of mere bones without flesh and when it cried it made the noise of a bull-roarer, not a baby. Hare told them to hide it away and initiate their subsequently born children." (6).

As in some South American communities the bull-roarer is intricately bound up with the initiation of young Elema boys, serving as an introduction to the secrets and myths surrounding this instrument. A boy's initiation is one of a series of social steps normally taken by every male. The ceremony means very little to the young boy at the time, but as he grows up he begins to feel a certain self-importance. Boys who are considered not to have passed through this ceremony successfully may be teased and laughed at by the other boys. The ceremony is not the final entrance into manhood but it is, nevertheless, one of the first stages in boy's progress towards gaining a recognised place in the social structure. As a male secret society it is a means of keeping women in what the men consider, and what the women themselves also feel, to be their proper place.

The performance of the ceremony is an occasion for the feasts and gatherings which play an important role in the Papuan society. Apart from the visual excitement of the ceremony, it provides a means of drawing people together and extending a circle of goodwill. It is an occasion for the interchange or circulation of wealth which is the central feature of this event. There is an exchange of gifts between the boy and a male member of his family. This is usually an uncle on his mother's side whose role is as an important godfather-like figure. From the boy the gifts are of pigs, dogs,

fowl or other animals, or food. In return the uncle gives such things as dog's teeth, crescent pearl shells, arm shells, shell discs and so on. Great importance is attached to these latter gifts and interest is shown in them by the whole community. Besides these presents the uncle gives the boy his first bow, drum and string bag. He also makes a gift of a bull-roarer which is intricately carved and painted red. The uncle adorns the boy, placing the gifts over his head and across his shoulders.

For the ceremony the boy is cleaned thoroughly and his body and face are decorate with streaks of red ochre colouring. He also wears a sash of green areca nuts and pepper fruit threaded onto a string.

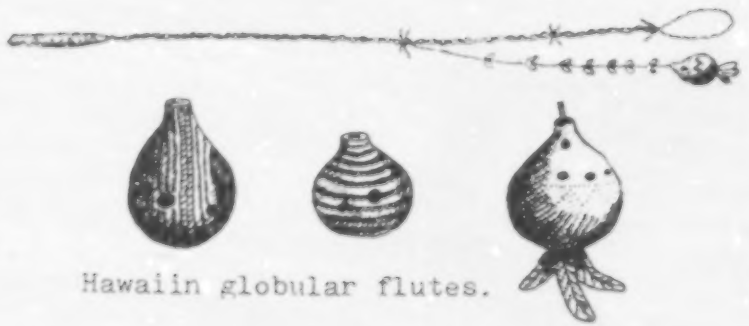
> "It is an amusing sight to see the very smallest of children, often infants in arms, fairly loaded with ornaments many times too large for them." (7).

The ceremony lasts an hour or two concluding with a large feast. The boys simply disperse. During the night the bull-roarer may sound on and off, but all the previous enthusiasm disappears.

Globular Flutes

Globular flutes have been made of natural materials such as gourds, coconut shells, fruit shells and have been imitated in clay, porcelain and other such materials.

Globular flutes existed in Egypt in pre-dynastic times as magical objects. They later became used as musical instruments and toys. The Maoris of New Zealand made gourd flutes with a varying number of holes. It is quite likely that they were played through the nose, the way that the Maoris played other flutes and whistles.



Hawaiin globular flutes.

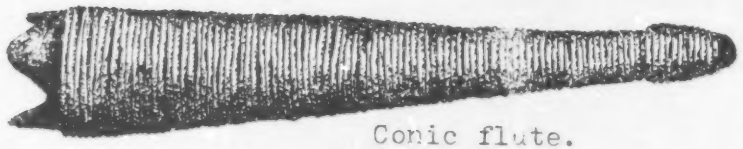
Other examples have also been found in the Hawaiian Islands. These have a variety of burnt designs. In one example the gourd was attached to a long cord, pierced with holes and swung around like a bull-roarer.

Moari globular nose flute.

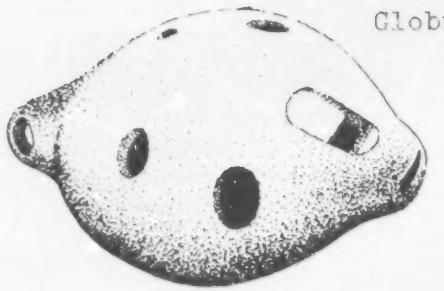
Simple Flutes

Flutes occur in hundreds of varieties. The principle with which they are sounded is simple. An air current striking the edge of a vessel is deflected and caused to vibrate within. The vessels have many different shapes but are generally globular, cylindrical or conical. The principle of making a sound with this simple flute is similar to the humming top.

Cylindrical flute.



Conic flute.



Globular flute.

The Humming Top

The humming top is a very simple noise making object. It can be made from a variety of materials. In parts of South America there are examples made from nut shells. In Korea conch shells are used, and in China and Japan bamboo. All have at least one hole pierced in the side. The top is put into rotation by jerking a cord which is wound round it. The spinning causes an air current to flow

Nut shell top, South america.

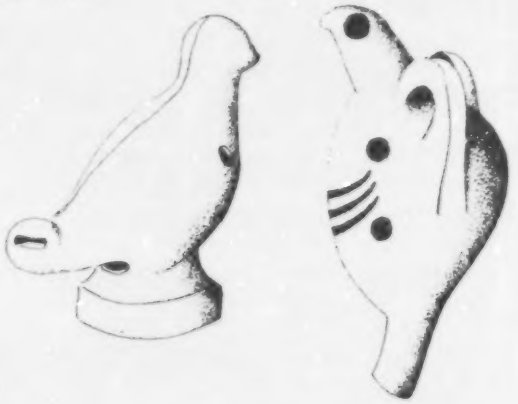
Bamboo top, Japan.

through the hole/s and produces a humming or whistling sound. The faster the rotation the higher the pitch. The top developed as and remains a widespread play object (New Zealand, Japan, China, Korea, New Guinea, North and South America) reaching its high point of popularity in England during Victorian times.

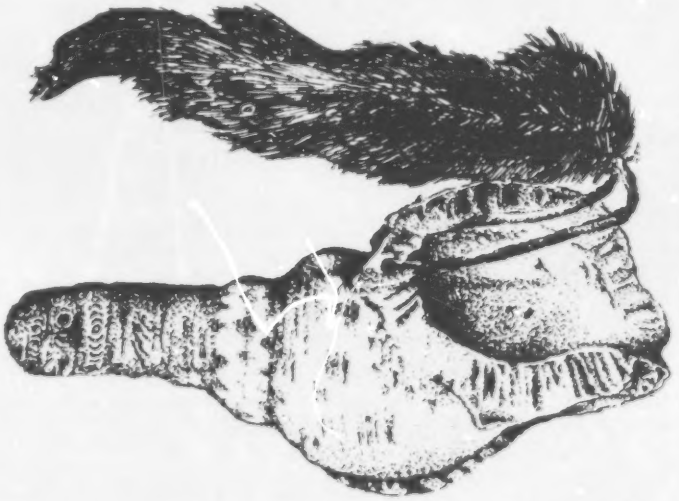
It would be unwise to credit a specific civilisation as the sole inventor of these objects. The invention of blowing into a hollow fruit has no doubt been made more than once throughout the world.

Globular Flutes in Europe

It is believed that globular flutes have been played in Europe since pre-historic times, but today they are chiefly confined to rural areas or else used as toys. From Russia to the Balearic Islands small clay whistles are made in the form of a bird, either with one or two finger holes or with none apart from the blow-hole. The latter when partly filled with water, warbles like a bird, the player's breath causing the water level to fluctuate.



Conch shells are well suited for producing sound objects. One can either bore a hole in the side of the shell or blow through the main hole of the shell if it not too large. It is often impossible to determine, when examples are found, whether a side hole has been made to blow through or used as a stop hole to produce an extra note. Triton shells are used by the Maoris of New Zealand. In the illustration feathers of the kakapo, or ground parrot, are attached to a cord which pierces the shell. Note the addition of a mouthpiece.



Moari Triton shell.

W.Colenso describes the shell as follows:-

> "The trumpets were made of wood or shell; for this latter purpose the shell of the large triton was used, its apex neatly cut off, its mouth scraped and the whole shell polished, and a mouthpiece of hard wocd, suitably hollowed and carved, was ingeniously fixed on." (8).

He continues:-

> "Shells or conches, to which are attached with ingenuity mouthpieces of carved wood, are prized by many of the peoples. A strip of dog's skin is attached to them for portability. The noise is as rude as can well be imagined. These shells are sometimes used in war to collect a scattered party, but as they do not admit of modulation, the name of musical instrument can scarcely be applied to them " (8).

The wooden mouthpiece is made in two halves which are lashed together when fixed to the shell. The Moaris cut off the conical point of the shell and secure the mouthpiece there. In Fiji, the Society Islands and many other islands in the Pacific, a round hole is made in the conical end into which a piece of bamboo cane is inserted serving as a mouthpiece.

The shell flute, or trumpet, has been used for thousands of years in Britain, across Europe and as far as India, Japan, Malasia and America. The triton was used by the Greeks for signalling purposes. In India it has been used as a trumpet in connection with Hindu and Buddhist religious ceremonies.

Fiji Shell

Plucked Objects

One of the earliest examples of a plucked instrument was the hunting bow. Among the wall paintings (c.15,000BC) in the cave Le Trois Freres in south-west France there is a scene which shows a bow. Here, however, it is not a hunting weapon but a musical instrument being used during what seems to be a religious ceremony.

The Ground Bow

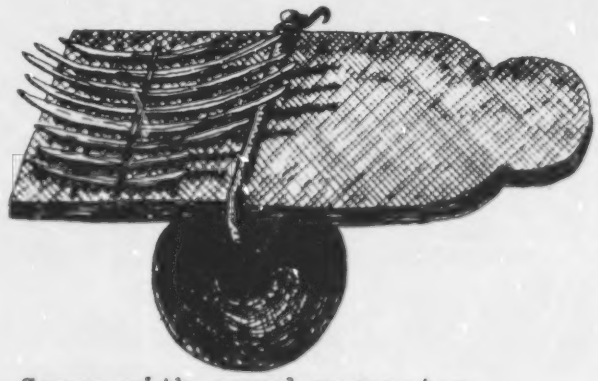
This is a very simple instrument. The earth has played an important role in man's early instrument making and in the ground bow we see both the earth and a plucking action being used at the same time. A small pit is dug in the ground as a sound hole or resonator. Close to it is a large stick fixed into the ground with a length of string tied to its free end. The other end of the string is tied to a piece of bark or similar material which is placed over the hole like a lid and is weighed down by a ring of stones or earth. The stick and the lid are adjusted to create enough tension to keep the string taut. A variety of sounds can be produced: plucking with the fingers, bowing it with another string or striking the stick with a club. Pygmies from the Congo area of Africa prefer a more percussive sound. They have a second player

who drums with two sticks on the cover of the pit. The distribution of this instrument is probably far wider than some explorers have led us to believe because it looks very much like a game trap and is quickly improvised.

A similar one-cord object is constructed in Indonesia, Madagascar, the Nile Congo water-shed and Uganda. A central post stands on a stone slab covering a sound hole in the ground. It is constructed in much the same manner as a tent frame. The string is plucked or beaten by one or a number of players.

Ground bow from Madagaskar.

It is not difficult to find reasons for music being rhythmic, for rhythm is inherent in all bodily movement. The rise of melody on sound objects is much more difficult to explain. The human voice is capable of an infinity of gradations of sound within its range but similar gradations can be achieved on few instruments. Melody implies selection and there is little evidence to suggest why many instruments have arrived at the range of of notes that they encompass. There are many examples of instruments that have a combination of percussion and melody, eg. the xylophone, the piano forte and the sanza.

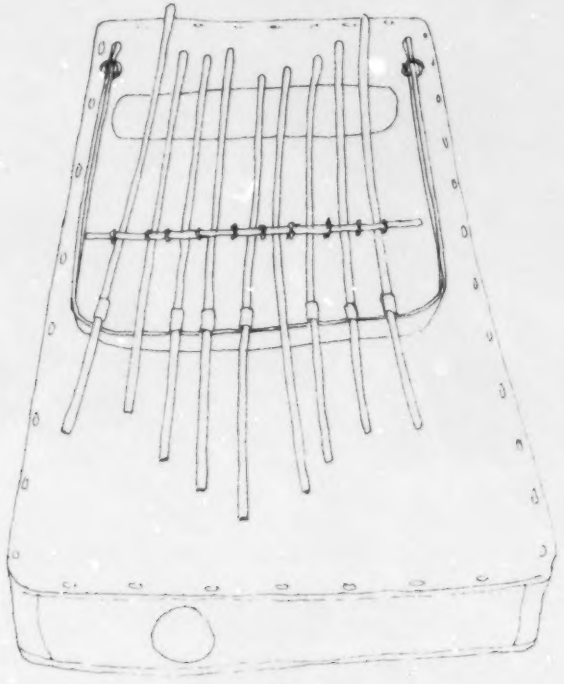


Sanza with gourd resonator.

The sanza is widely believed to have been invented in the continent of Africa. A set of long thin iron tongues are clamped onto a sound board so that they vibrate like a ruler on the edge of a desk. The free ends of the tongues are depressed or released by the forefingers and thumbs. Occasionally pieces of bamboo or cane are used instead of metal. The tongues are usually adjustable to be able to alter their tuning. In this respect the sanza is far in advance of other percussion instruments.

Pitch is determined by the length of the tongues. Fine tuning can be achieved by affixing small balls of bees wax or rubber to the undersides of the free ends. Sometimes the tongues can be arranged on different levels. In Zaire and Angola they occur on two or three levels.

In some areas of Central Africa the sanza is attached to a gourd resonator which is pressed against the player's body, but more often the sound box takes the form of a box with holes.



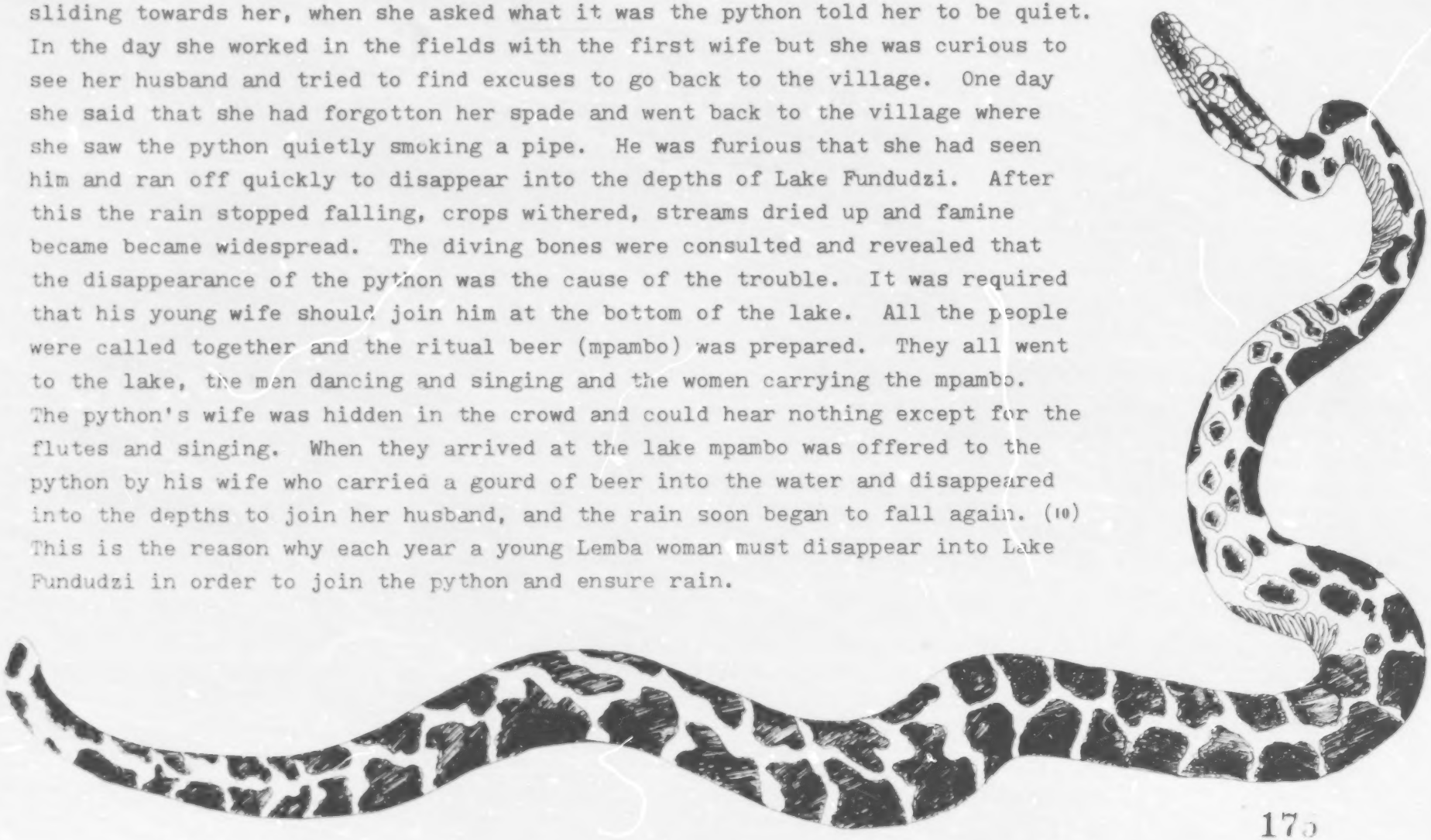
It produces a sound which African people find pleasing and it is often referred to as the 'little African piano'. It can have from 10 to 30 keys allowing it a wide range of possible sounds which can be enlarged further by using several sanzas together.

The sanza is above all an instrument used for relaxation and recreation.

> "Many nightwatchmen in the commercial areas of African towns play sanzas to make the long night hours pass more quickly. It is also a popular instrument for people making long journeys on foot through the forests.... It can be played as a solo instrument or can accompany vocal or choral music." (9).

In some regions the sanza also has an important symbolic role. The Lemba, a Bantu tribe from the Transvaal, consider the sanza a sacred instrument. It represents the Lemba ancestors. Its appearance and the materials from which it is made are governed by laws associated with the myth of the python. The myth has significant importance as shown in the Domba or python dance. This is a fertility rite in which young men and women come together for a joint course of instruction in preparation for marriage. During the dance they simulate the slow uncoiling movements of the python. The python is directly linked with female fertility. An infertile female will wear a python skin around her neck and back in the hope of becoming fertile. This tradition arises from an old Lemba legend in which the python took a second wife who did not

realise that she was marrying a python. At night she felt something cold sliding towards her, when she asked what it was the python told her to be quiet. In the day she worked in the fields with the first wife but she was curious to see her husband and tried to find excuses to go back to the village. One day she said that she had forgotton her spade and went back to the village where she saw the python quietly smoking a pipe. He was furious that she had seen him and ran off quickly to disappear into the depths of Lake Fundudzi. After this the rain stopped falling, crops withered, streams dried up and famine became became widespread. The diving bones were consulted and revealed that the disappearance of the python was the cause of the trouble. It was required that his young wife should join him at the bottom of the lake. All the people were called together and the ritual beer (mpambo) was prepared. They all went to the lake, the men dancing and singing and the women carrying the mpambo. The python's wife was hidden in the crowd and could hear nothing except for the flutes and singing. When they arrived at the lake mpambo was offered to the python by his wife who carried a gourd of beer into the water and disappeared into the depths to join her husband, and the rain soon began to fall again. (10) This is the reason why each year a young Lemba woman must disappear into Lake Fundudzi in order to join the python and ensure rain.



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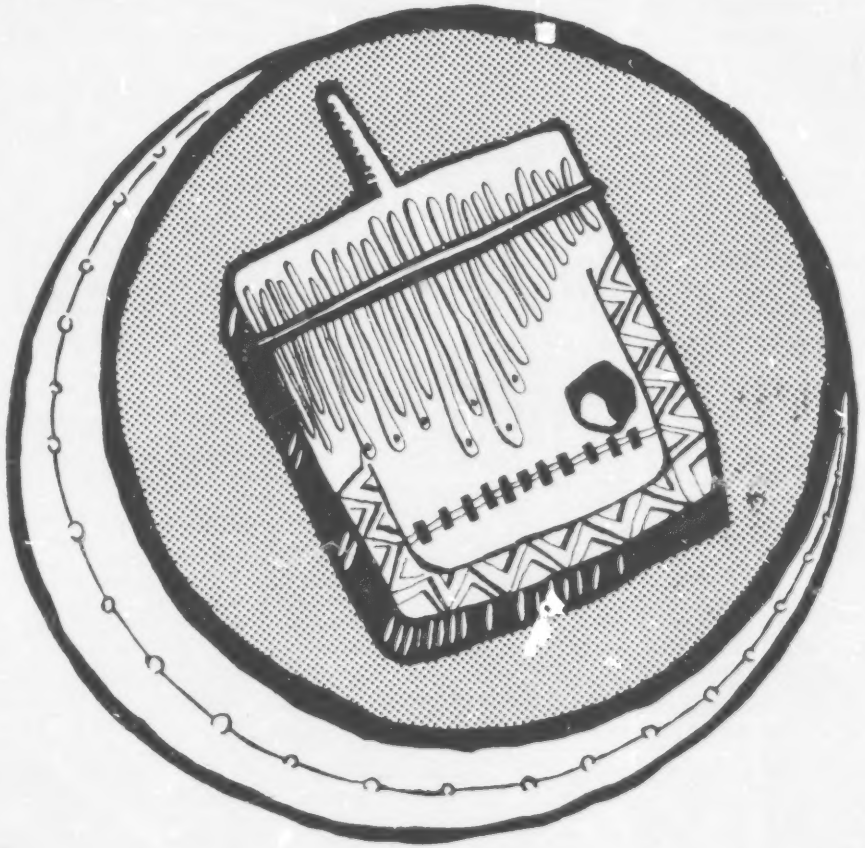
The Lemba sanza, known locally as the Deza Sanza, has 22 keys in an hemispherical calabash resonator. It represents the whole of creation within the python's stomach. The striking of the keys to produce a sound is thought to be an act of creation as it sounds like the cry of a newly born child. The wooden frame represents the women who come to assist at the birth. Each component part of the sanza is symbolic. The calabash is the womb, the string tied around it represents the python skin and the keys are people seated inside the belly of the python. Thus the Deza Sanza creates sound and represents the perpetual renewal of the first act of creation. It also reflects the structure of the society. As far as the Lemba are concerned the Desa Sanza is parallel to life.



The Lemba Deza Sanza.

Beaten Objects

Early Examples

Early explorers in Ethiopia noted the existence of a very simple drum, 'the drum of the earth', an instrument requiring only the crudest of tools and materials. Two holes of different depths are dug into the ground and beaten with the flats of the hands which causes them to vibrate.

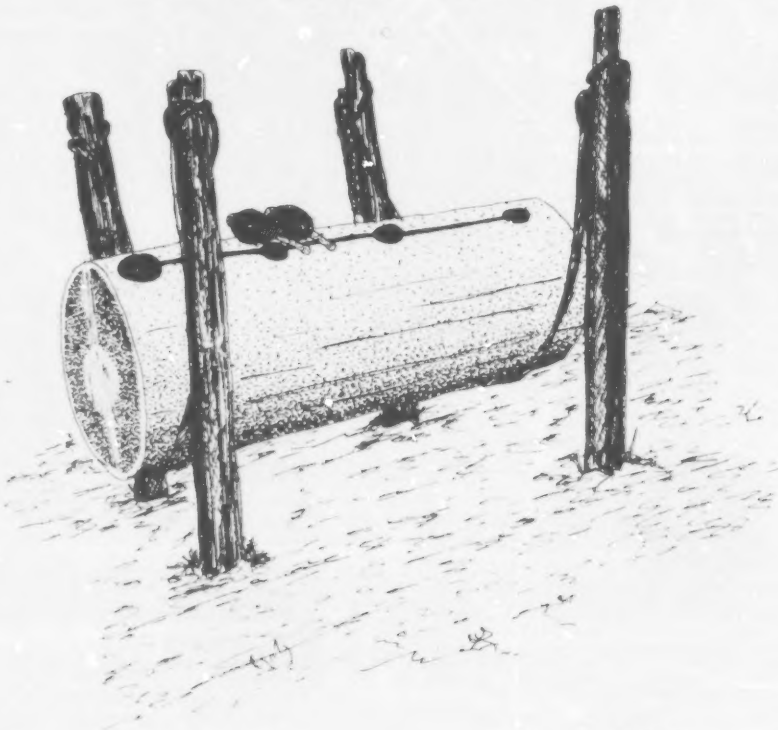
The 'drum of sand' can be found in the Ethiopian province of Wollo and among the pigmy peoples of Papua New Guinea. This is a pit in the form of a short tunnel with an uncovered opening at each end. The bridge between these two openings is beaten with the hands.

The Slit Drum

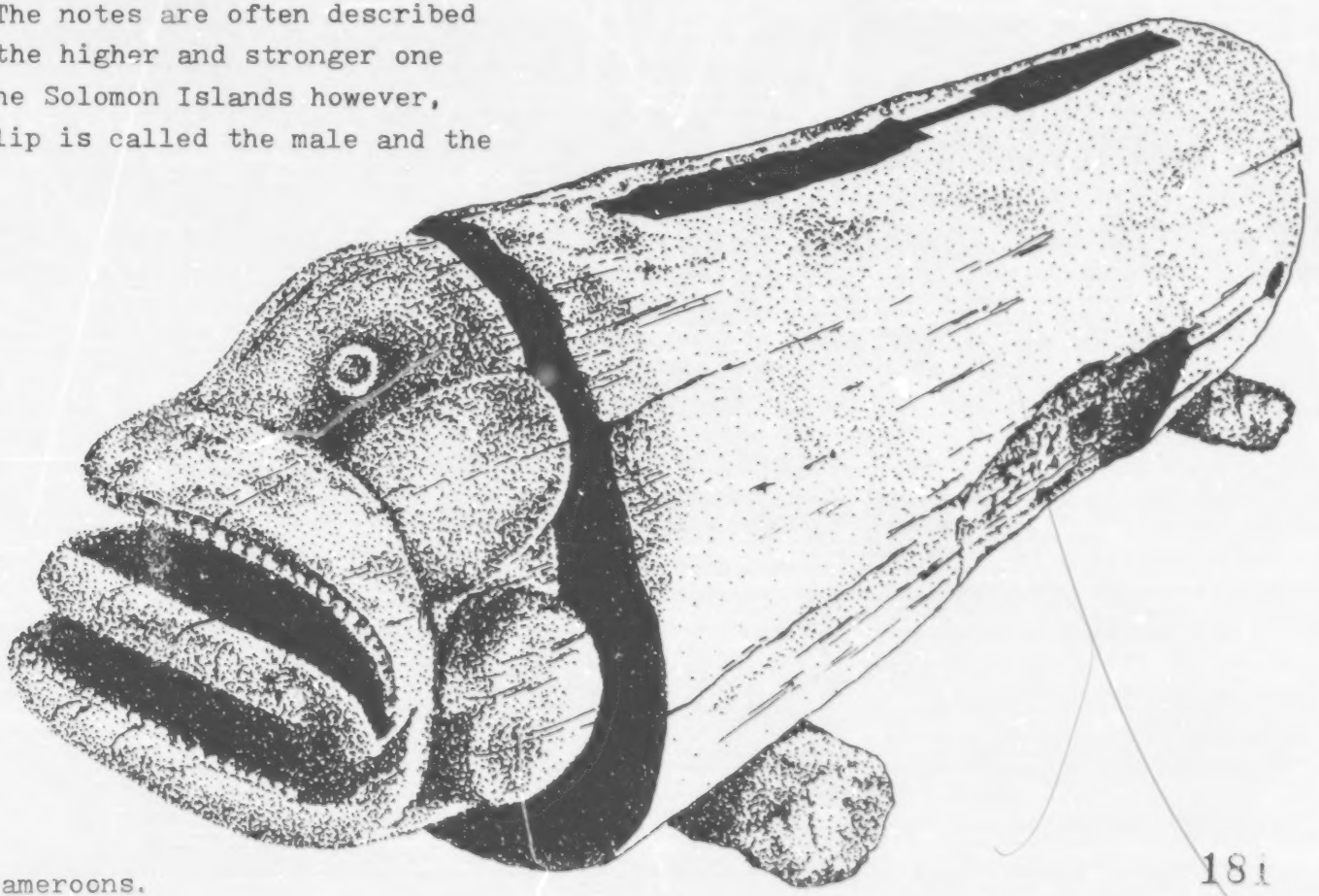
It is likely that these early drums led to the development of the slit drum. The drum consists of a hollowed tree trunk, the inside of which is removed through a long slit in its upper side so that the finished shell resembles a canoe. The sound of the drum has a considerable carrying power.

As with many other instruments the size of the slit drum diminished with its development. Types in use today vary from the small portable examples carried by Malayan watchmen, to the lengthier ones of South America and West Africa which are placed on a framework of four beams or legs in order to amplify the sound.

South American slit drum.



Examples of this instrument are often expertly carved. In the Cameroons for example, they may be decorated with a head and a tail to resemble an animal. The lips of the slit drum are usually of differing thicknesses making the drum capable of two distinct notes. The notes are often described as male and female, the higher and stronger one being the male. On the Solomon Islands however, the deeper sounding lip is called the male and the higher one female.

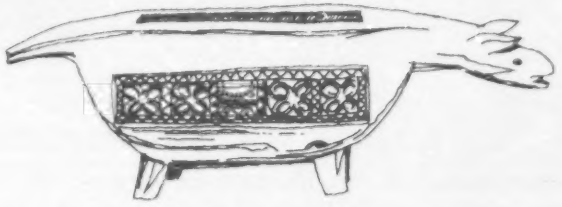


Slit drum from the Cameroons.

180

181

Instruments of this kind are often found in museum collections. Interesting examples can be seen in the British Museum (Museum of Mankind). The largest specimen from Eastern Sudan is nine feet long and three feet wide and is carved in the form of an animal with a head, tail and feet.



Sudanese slit drum, Museum of Mankind.

Slit drums are common in many parts of Africa, Central and South Africa and the Far East, particularly Japan and China. Huge slit drums are used to call people to prayer in Burma and are suspended vertically at the entrance of a temple.

Slit drums are also found in the New Hebredes, about 1,000 miles north of New Zealand. Here they can reach a length of up to 12 feet and are carved to represent a monster with a sinister face and body. The drums are played in an upright position. Their demon-like appearance is intensified by the

light of the moon, for it is at full moon that the local people gather to perform their special rites. Apart from its magical and religious significance the slit drum has been, and remains, an important means of communication.

Drums as Instruments for Magic and Thunder

Long before the drum became specifically a musical instrument many cultures believed that its noise making qualities endowed it with the power of making thunder and chasing away evil spirits. These qualities have also been employed to frighten away enemies. In the ancient near-East the hide of a bull was used as a drum head. As the bull was a revered animal throughout the area to Egypt, Crete and over much of India the drum became a sacred object.

However it was in Japan and China that thunder drums achieved a high level of development. The Chinese Duke of Thunder, Lei Kung, has traditionally been a focus of worship and his image is often surrounded by numerous drums which he beats in order to obtain the noise of thunder. It is the sound of these drums which many people in ancient China believed to be the cause of death. Half bird and

half man, the Japanese thunder god, Zin Shin, has also been shown surrounded by a revolving wheel to which a number of barrel shaped drums are affixed. He is often shown holding a large drumstick in one hand and a thunderbolt in the other.

Drums as a means of Communication

In many parts of remote Central Africa the sound of a drum often constitutes a form of coded message, a 'bush telegraph'. Loud drum beats can create a conversation by which news travels at considerable speed. The different drum languages are almost as numerous as the verbal languages and dialects within Africa.

Early European explorers in the continent were often confounded by the advance knowlede the local people had of their movements over large areas. Stanley made constant references in his accounts of the expedition of 1875-1877 to the 'sonorous war drums'. Speaking of a tribe living on the banks of the Congo River he said:

> "The islanders have not yet adopted electrical signals but possess a system of communication quite as effective. Their huge drums being struck in different parts to convey a language as clear to the people who understand it as ordinary speech." (11).

The slit drum can usually only produce two notes and it is for this reason that messages are coded and consist of a series of morse-like phrases. For example the arrival of whitemen, police or other strangers in the village is greeted with the phrase 'They are here.....they are here.....'

Some slit drums, particularly those in the Cameroons, are often given names consisting of a proverb or a riddle. For example: 'pain doesn't kill', 'death has no master' and 'you can't fight a war with one arm'.

Often the noise of a drum is a reminder of the circumstances in which the drum is played, thus the drum which announces happy events is not used to spread the word of death.

Instruments and techniques as well as the types of drum languages used differ from area to area. The Yoruba of Nigeria use a two-headed, tensioned hour-glass drum. This instrument is held under the

armpit and struck with a hammer shaped stick. Variations in the tension of the skin are obtained by exerting pressure with the inside of the arms on the leather thongs that connect the skins to either end. This gives varying sounds which can virtually recreate all the tones of verbal speech. The drum sends actual spoken messages, that is, the player regulates the pressure with his arms so as to produce notes that correspond to the words he is transmitting.

This method of playing 'spoken phrases' on the drum is particularly appropriate with tonal languages such as that of the Yoruba. The hour-glass drum is able to reproduce, or at least to represent, all the varying sounds of the spoken language. There are many words which will sound the same when they are played on the drum and so to avoid confusion a type of code is agreed on beforehand between the player and those who will be listening.

Single-headed drums are also used to send messages in other parts of West Africa. Progress in the service of tradition could be said to be the motto of Radio Ghana which for many years has been announcing its new broadcasts with drums saying 'Ghana listen.... Ghana listen.'

Ashanti Drum Making

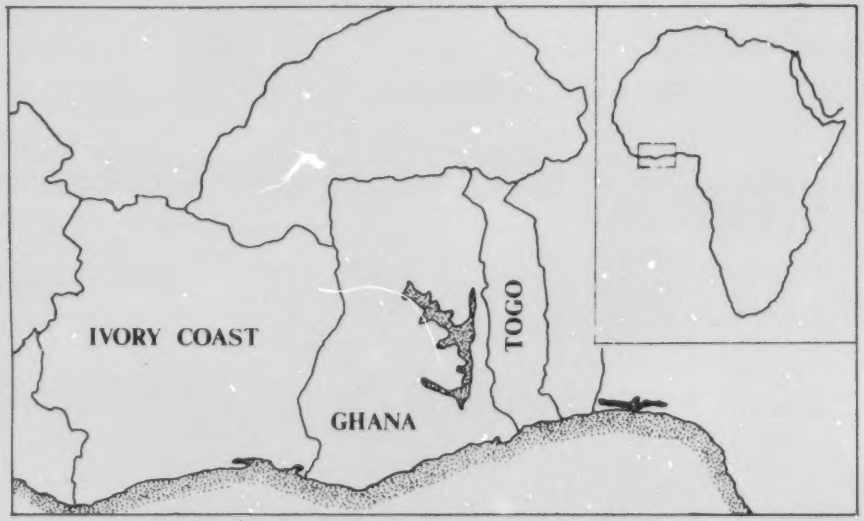
The Ashanti occupy much of the southern half of Ghana, the adjacent areas of Togo and parts of the Ivory Coast. Although some Ashanti live in urban areas most are still village people with much of their working life spent cultivating yams, bananas, manioc etc. for local markets, or cocoa for export.

Ashanti social organisation is based on matri-lineage with localised segments of a clan whose members claim descent from a common ancestress. All members share such activities as house building, farming and funeral rites.

The Ashanti believe that every individual is comprised of two elements - blood from their mother and spirit from their father. Paternal descent is, therefore, recognised and is associated with certain religious and moral obligations. The head of a lineage is chosen by its senior men and women. In fact females are prohibited from holding the position because of menstrual taboos forbidding contact with sacred objects, eg. drums. The Head is responsible for internal peace and relations with other lineages. He is also considered to be the mediator between dead and living members.

Traditionally the Ashanti state was divided into territories consisting of groups of villages. Each territorial division had its own chief. The Ashanti capital, Kumasi, provided the overall tribal chief. A chief's main duties were both religious and military but in modern times the position has become increasingly administrative.

There are Christian and Muslim converts among the Ashanti. However the traditional religion remains the basis of the Ashanti view of the world. This incorporates a belief in a distant supreme being, a pantheon of gods and lesser spirits as well as the ever present spirits of ancestors.



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In many societies drum making is steeped in tradition and the observation of certain rites. Rattray tells us of the customs of the Ashanti. For example, the tree from which the drum is made is chosen with great care. The wood must be hard and durable and not spoiled by insects. Before the tree is cut, homage is paid to it and various offerings are made. An egg is thrown against the tree and the following words spoken:

> "I am coming to cut you down and carve you, recieve the egg and eat. Let me be able to cut and carve you. Do not let the iron cut me and do not let me suffer in health." (12)

In carving the drum shell the craftsman is as concerned with the inside as with the outside. He constantly tests the pitch of the shell with a thin stick and carves the inside accordingly.

Fetishes are sometimes suspended from the side of the shell or may be placed inside the body before the skin is stretched across the opening. Fetishes vary from region to region according to local beliefs. They can include skulls, bones, shells, sacred stones and organs from the body of the animal whose skin is used on the drum.

The drum maker is a man of importance among the Ashanti. He is skilled with the adze axe and iron chisel. He is revered so much in many Ashanti villages that only he is allowed to perform on the finished article, which is frequently made under conditions of great secrecy.

Ashanti decoration

Drum Skins

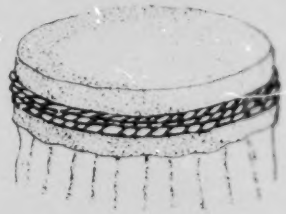
The skins used to cover drums are as diverse as the types of drums in existence. They can include the hides of oxen, sheep, goat, deer, buck, zebra, antelope, giraffe, monkey, leopard, gazelle, springbok etc. The skins of lizards and snakes are also used. Among the more unusual skins used are bats wings, elephants ears and, though there is no evidence of this in the 20th century, the skin of a captured enemy. Female elephant hide is considered by many to give an especially rich tone. Varying powers are attributed to certain skins, eg. cow-hide is believed to bring rain, and goat skin to produce thunder.

The treatment of the skin for drums is fairly consistent. The thickness of the skin is normally determined by the size of the drum shell. Part of the preparation consists of the inner layer of fat being removed from the hide. After this the skin is 'evened out' by means of scraping with a knife and pumelling with flat heavy stones. Hair is removed from the outer side. To speed up the process the skin may be buried for several days in order to loosen the flesh and the hair. Finally the skin is moistened or greased and then pegged out on the ground to be stretched and left to dry in the sun.

When mounting the skin it is moistened to make it pliable so that takes the shape of the drum shell easily. Fixing the skin to the drum is relatively easy. The moistened hide stretches whilst being mounted and then shrinks as it dries, fitting the drum shell tightly.

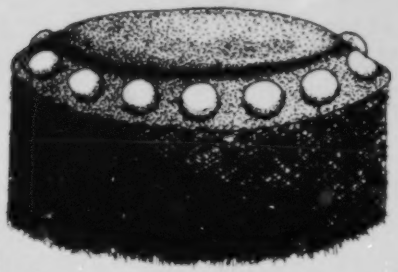
Methods of fixing Skins to Drums

1. Necklacing.
This involves securing the skin to the rim of the drum with one complete cord. This simple method can be applied to drum shells of wood, clay or metal. There is often a groove just under the edge of the rim which ensures a firm grip. Necklacing is usually used for small drums.

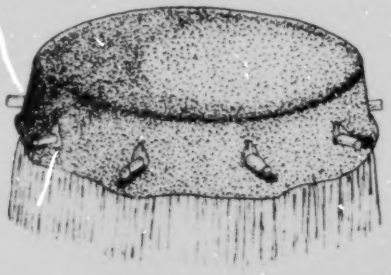


Necklacing.

2. Pegging or Nailing.
This is used on wooden drums of all sizes, in particular on those with a single head. The skin is secured to the drum by means of wooden pegs or nails.

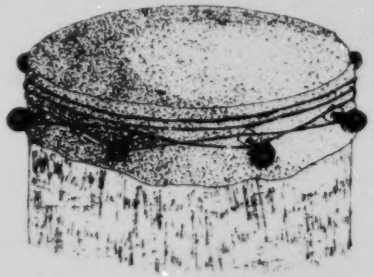


Nailed.



Pegged.

3. Buttoning.
The edge of the skin is cut or shaped to form loops which are then hooked onto pegs in the shell. One or more loops may be twisted onto each peg.



Buttoning.

4. Braced or Laced.
Braces are made from thin strips of hide or other materials twisted into a cord, and are attached to the skin through a series of small holes. Cords that attach the two skins of a double-headed drum stretch along the drum in a continuous series of

'V' turns or criss-crosses. On double-headed drums it is common to see each of the drums attached in a different manner. Occasionally the tension of the cords in the bracing technique can be altered by pieces of dowel which are placed between the cords and the drum-shell.

Braced.

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Playing Cards

ETHNOGRAPHIC RESOURCES
FOR ART EDUCATION

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Researched and written by Kathryn Hemmings; illustrated and designed and produced by Kathryn Hemmings, Roy Upson, Julie Davies and Yvonne Brierley.

CONTENTS

The Origins of Playing Cards..... 1

European Playing Cards..... 4

Tarot Cards and Fortune Telling..... 8

The Playing Cards of Mamluk Egypt..... 12

Playing Cards of the Apache Peoples of North America..... 16

Indian Playing Cards..... 23

References..... 28

Bibliography..... 29

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Invaluable help has been given by the following in the preparation of this resource book:

Mr Trevor Denning, for his initial guidance;

Mr Anthony Beale, Secretary of the Playing Card Society, who provided several important contacts;

Mrs Virginia Wayland for her generous assistance in providing information on the playing cards of the Apaches;

Mr Peter Gibbs, Museum Assistant for North America at the Museum of Mankind Store, who cleared up several points on the Native American tribes;

Dr Rudolf von Leyden, for his kind permission to reproduce illustrations contained in his catalogue 'Ganjifa - Playing Cards of India';

Dr James Dickie, who verified the accuracy of the information about the Islamic religion;

Professor Michael Dummett for advice on the presentation of the Mamluk playing card section;

Dr Shuyler Jones who generously gave his time and help to the entire team, allowing us to use the facilities, and to take photographs, in the Pitt Rivers Museum.

The Origins of Playing Cards

Why Play with Cards?

For centuries people have been fascinated by playing cards, their popularity has hardly dwindled even since the invention of entertainments like radio and television. Card games can be simple for children or so complex that they require advanced reasoning. Cards are also used for education, fortune telling and conjuring.

In most games the cards are dealt face downwards and the object is to capture other cards, to get rid of your own cards or to get a winning combination of cards. Playing cards are usually tough but pliable which makes them pleasant to handle. Modern cards are smooth and uniform so that with practice they can be shuffled in a variety of ways. A card player can gain status amongst other card players by the agility with which he or she handles the cards.

Card games for pleasure and competition have been more important than other uses of cards. They have allowed men and women to compete on equal terms in countries and during times when women were not always given equal rights and status to men.

Cards for Children

Modern card games for children are necessarily simple as they must appeal to all age groups. Children enjoy playing them often because they can compete with adults with a chance of winning. Some games are educational such as Casino which gives practice in maths. Often card games can help children develop coordination and concentration. Cards have sometimes been used as teaching aids in various subjects. A cardinal used cards with figures and names below to teach young Louis XIV of France geography and Greek mythology.

THE GREAT CARD SCANDAL
The Queen of Hearts gives the Jack of Clubs 'What for'
(from 'Fun' February 1891)By permission of the British Library

212

Cards have been popular with rich and poor people alike despite attempts by monarchs, nobles and governments to discourage their use, often by law. When cards were first introduced into Europe, some of the clergy condemned them, others dismissed them as harmless. Some people called them 'Devil's picture books' or 'Devil's tickets'. In northern Italy in 1450 a Franciscan Friar said that Tarot cards had been named and invented by the Devil(1). But some cards had religious writings on them, and money from their sale was given to religious organizations. Meanwhile a Moghul emperor of India, Akbar the Great, invented a pack of cards showing scenes from his court which is still used today.

In England in the late 19th century, gambling had become so reckless that people sometimes fought duels over large sums of money. In 1890 people were shocked when the future King Edward VII was involved in a court case over cheating at cards. The card cheating scandal happened whilst he was staying in a house called Tranby Croft for the Doncaster Races. 'The Times' newspaper urged him to sign a pledge to never again play cards for money.

213

Where did Playing Cards come from?

Playing cards are not a universal game in that they have not appeared naturally all over the world but instead have migrated from one culture to another over hundreds of years. There have been many and varied theories about where playing cards were invented, but today it seems most likely that they originated in China. The Chinese were the first people to have paper money and there was mention in Chinese writings of playing cards as early as 969 AD[2]. Their playing cards had four suits representing money values, so it seems likely that once they had made paper money and begun to gamble with it, it was a simple step to invent a gambling device which looked like money, but which was not.

During the 13th century after the Mongol conquest communication between east and west was opened up and colonies of Chinese lived in Iranian towns like Tabriz where their card games were modified by local people, influenced by the game of chess. They kept four suits but introduced leading figures of King and Vizier which we call court cards. Cards next found their way into Mamluk Egypt and Syria where they were given local elite court characters but where they were decorated not with drawings of these people but with beautiful traditional patterns of the Islamic religion. In the 1370's playing cards reached Europe. An entry in the Chronicles of Viterbo, Italy says 'In the Year 1379 there was brought to Viterbo the game of cards which comes from the land of the Saracens and is called amongst them "naib" '[3]. 'The Saracens' refers to the Moslem peoples of the time, including the Mamluks, with whom the Christians of Europe had not been on good terms since the Crusades. 'Naib' is written upon some of the court cards of the Mamluk pack still in existence today. Since Venice was trading with the Moslem countries around this time, it is probably through Venice that the cards arrived in Europe where they spread rapidly from country to country and then were taken all around the world by various explorers, travellers and traders. Spanish sailors took their cards to Mexico from where they spread across America. Spanish and Portuguese card designs found their way as far as Java, Japan and India. As the Italians adapted the Islamic designs which they copied, other countries adapted what they saw to fit in with their own traditions and raw materials. Where the designs were not understood they were converted to objects of similar shapes. So card designs and suit symbols changed.

European Playing Cards

Manufacture

As we have seen, all the evidence suggests that playing cards arrived in Europe from Moslem countries like Mamluk Egypt, through trade with Venice. Earliest European playing cards were handmade and beautifully painted but because they were so expensive, only the rich could afford to buy them. It was not until the invention of printing that everyone could afford to buy playing cards.

Modern Spanish Knave of Batons, mass produced
Knave of Acorns, 16th century German woodcut

During the 15th century, cards were printed from woodcuts, a form of printing first used by the German cardmakers of Ulm, Nuremburg and Augsburg, whose cards were exported to many countries. An old Ulm Chronicle of about 1397 says: 'Playing cards were sent in small casks into Italy, Sicily and also over the sea, and bartered for spices and other wares'[(4)]. After complaints by Italian card makers that their craft was suffering because of heavy imports of cards, an order of the magistracy of Venice in 1441 forbade imports with heavy penalties for anyone breaking the rule. In England by 1463, the making and use of playing cards was well established enough for manufacturers to ask for protection against imports.

With the invention of the printing press, the slow methods of hand colouring and woodblocking were replaced in the 16th century by copperplate engraving. In the early 19th century lithography began to be used for colour printing, producing many beautiful German, Italian and French cards. Today the photoengraving process used in the manufacture of cards has made it into a massive industry turning out millions of packs each year.

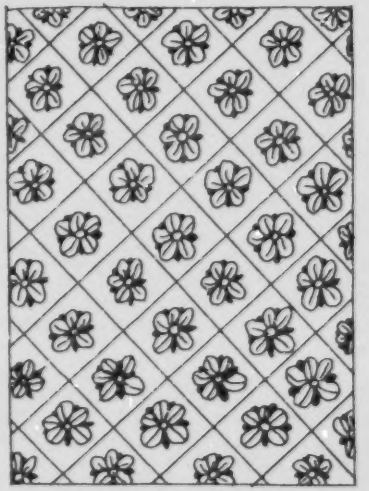
Court Card Design

Like other forms of art, the design of European court cards reflected the various whims of artists and the fashions of the time. At first, full length court figures portrayed various rulers. Artists altered court cards to resemble important rulers or nobility of the day; names, costumes and weapons were also changed.

During the reign of Henry III of France, costumes reflected the extravagant fashions of the day. When Henry IV of Navarre came to the throne, card costumes and names were immediately altered. During the French Revolution the playing card royal family was hastily removed from the pack, sometimes merely cut out of the plate leaving a large hole, because of the antagonism towards the nobility. Often the royals were replaced by philosophers and other important people. By 1813 the playing card royalty had reappeared and it remains to this day.

Double-headed court cards, that is those that look the same whether viewed from top or bottom, first appeared in France in 1827. They became part of the Anglo-French design which is now accepted as standard all over the world.

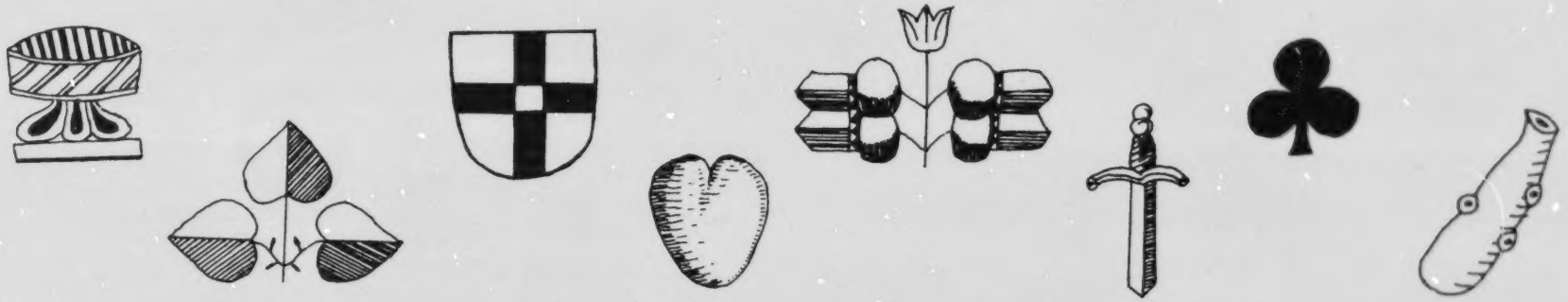
Early playing cards generally used to have plain unpatterned and uncoloured backs, but in the early 1800's simple patterns began to appear and by the end of the 19th century, back design had become an important part of the playing card industry, especially because with the increase in the popularity of gambling for high stakes it had become important to avoid suspicion of a marked deck.



Genius of Commerce court card from the French Revolution

Early back design

Suit Marks



Suit marks passed through many important changes in form as they spread through Europe. The Italian suits of cups, coins, swords and batons are thought to be representative of the church, money and trade, soldiers and agriculture. German suits showed hawkbells for the nobility, hearts for the clergy, leaves for the citizenry and acorns for the peasantry. The Swiss replaced leaves and acorns with shields and flowers. Card makers of France simplified the shapes of the suit emblems and divided the pack into a two colour system (red and black) for easy identification. La Hire, a French knight introduced the suit marks of pikeheads, hearts, diamonds and clubs.

The Spanish took their design from the Italians but simplified it. Local colours were used for cards of various Spanish regions, golden yellows in Seville and more tawny colours in Castile. The Spanish Ace of Coins always to this day displays the Arms of Spain, there is no female court figure and the four of each suit usually bears a fancy design. Cards of Spanish design are now used in Spain, Morocco and South America. Some of the coins on cards of the coins suit still show the heads of Ferdinand and Isobella, the Catholic king and queen of Spain who in 1492 finally drove the Arabs out of the city of Granada.

American manufacturers have tried to introduce strictly American suit symbols of stars, stripes, shields and eagles, but with little success as people have tended to adopt the Anglo-French design all over the world, especially for the games of rummy, poker and bridge, often keeping their local designs to use with their own traditional games.

How European Cards Influenced the World

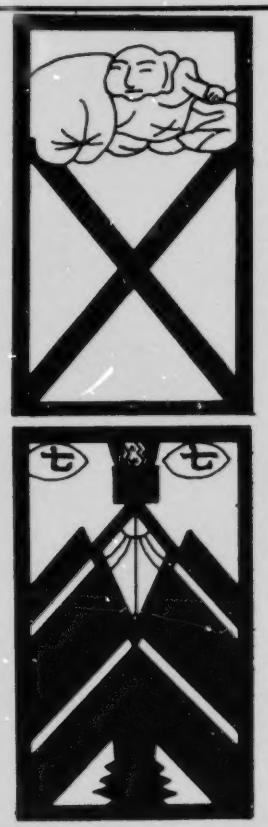
Spanish cards were carried all over the world in the ships of Bartholomew Diaz, Christopher Columbus, Vasco Da Gama and others. Cards of Spanish design are now used in Spain, Morocco and South America.

The Portuguese suit system was an influence in Brazil, Indonesia and Japan. It differed from the Spanish mainly in that its swords and clubs crossed in a trellis pattern. Female valets or maids were court cards and the aces were decorated with dragons.

In Japan the Portuguese suit system was quickly adapted, producing very attractive but Japanese looking cards. As time has passed the original suit signs have become difficult to identify, so heavily disguised have they become.

Modern handpainted Javanese cards show that certain aspects of the Portuguese style, such as the use of dragon images, were adopted in an individual way using bright colours, perhaps reflecting the sunny environment of the artist.

Modern Japanese cards of the swords and batons suits



Javanese handpainted watercolour playing card

Tarot Cards and Fortune Telling

Fortune Telling

The first evidence that playing cards were used to try to predict the future dates from the 1480's when a book was printed which explained that a card removed from a shuffled pack had a special meaning, and listed the 'meanings' of all the cards in the pack. Obviously the idea did not catch on straight away because it wasn't until 1540 that a similar book appeared, the 'Francesco Marcelino Book of Fate', and later on 'Lenthall's Fortune Telling Game', which had its own specially designed pack of cards.(5)

These methods all used normal packs of playing cards and not Tarot packs. It is easy to imagine how simple it was to adapt cards to fortune telling. The fact that they can be shuffled might lead the user to think that he or she unconsciously influences the cards by putting them into a certain order. Just as the turn of the card affects the outcome of a game, so the turn of the card might affect the outcome of life. Just as a card can be good or bad for the player, so this rule can be imagined to apply to life.

In France, fortune telling from cards really caught on in the 18th and 19th centuries. The

symbols on French playing cards conveniently fitted in with the theme of good and bad luck. Their cards had the two red suits and two black suits most common around the world today. The colour black was associated with mourning and death and came to signify negative things in fortune telling; the red cards came to mean good luck. The heart symbol was easily associated with love and so the ten of hearts meant 'luck in love' whilst the ace of spades meant 'a death'.

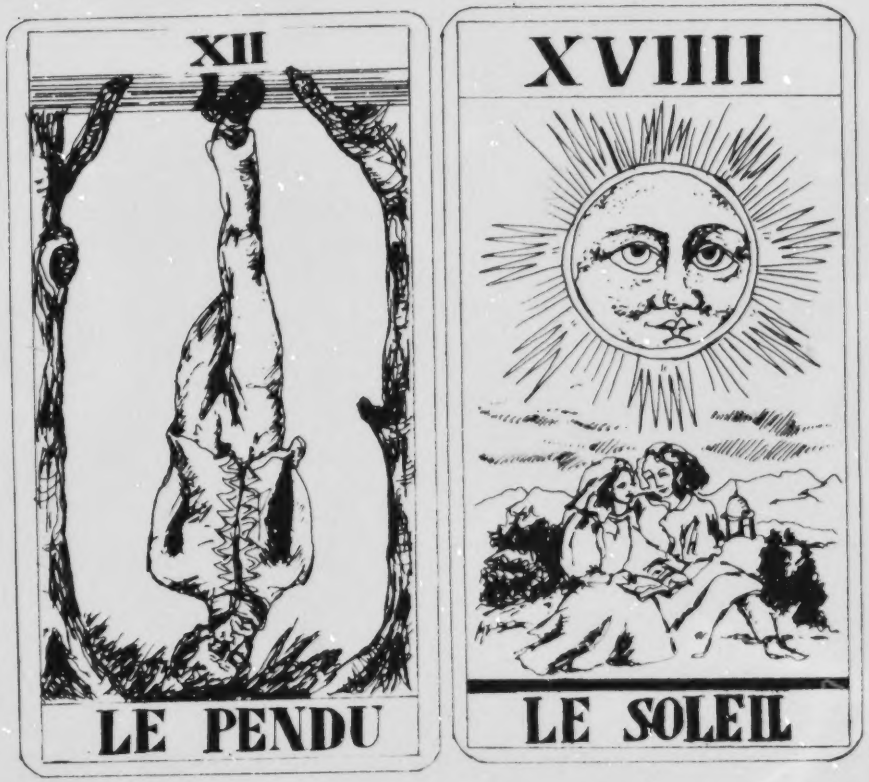
Tarot cards are different from usual packs of cards because as well as containing four suits, the pack also contains 21 picture cards, making a total pack of 78. Tarot cards might have been invented in the valley of the Taro River, a tributary of the Po in Northern Italy. There are several handpainted 15th century packs belonging to some famous Italian families which were made close to that area.

Although today many people accept that Tarot cards are mysterious things, only ever used for looking into the future, there is no evidence to support the fact of their being anything but a type of card originally used for playing games.

Pictures were often used by monks during the 15th century to help with teaching. Some famous picture cards, the 'Tarocchi of Mantegna' were designed as a portable encyclopaedia for young noblemen. It is possible that Tarot cards developed from these beginnings. However there was a great deal of opposition from the clergy to Tarot cards in 15th century Italy. In 1450 a Franciscan Friar of Northern Italy said:

'There is nothing in the world of gaming so hateful to God as the game of "triumphs"... given their name by the Devil their inventor ...In it not only are God, the angels, the planets and the cardinal virtues represented and named, but also...the Pope and the Emperor are forced, a thing which is ridiculous and degrading to Christians, to enter the game. For there are 21 "triumphs" which are the 21 steps of a ladder which takes man to the depths of hell.(1)

This makes it seem less likely that the tarots themselves were designed by monks. But regardless of who designed them we know from their cup, coin, sword and baton suits that they began in Italy and were, and sometimes still are, used as playing cards.



Tarot cards 'The Hanged Man' and 'The Sun'

The 21 picture cards, now known as the 'Major Arcana' (from arcanum meaning 'a mystery') are as follows:
1)Magician 2)Popess 3)Empress 4)Emperor 5)Pope 6)Lovers 7)Chariot 8)Justice 9)Hermit 10)Wheel of Fortune 11)Fortitude 12)Hanged Man 13)Death 14)Temperance 15)Devil 16)Tower 17)Star 18)Moon 19)Sun 20)Judgement 21)World.
There is also the 'Fool' who often in fortune telling represents man on the path of life. In reading a fortune, these picture cards represent forces, virtues and vices; the cards are interpreted using these set meanings and the tellers assessment of the person he reads the cards for.

It was only after the regular pack had come to be established for use in fortune telling that a French scholar Court de Gebelin came across Tarot cards at a time when people were fascinated with the occult and astrology in the 1780's. He evolved a philosophy around the idea that Tarot cards had mystical properties. Once the idea was suggested that the Tarot pack was magical, it was readily believed, especially since the history of the pack was so mysterious. It seems that people like to believe in the mysterious and the unexplained. In the 1780's a fashionable fortune teller named Ettiela added some changes to the Tarot theory and designed his own pack which is still used to this day. Tarot was soon being seriously studied by all sorts of people, including most famously Eliphas Levi and Papus (Dr Gerard Encausse) who in 1889 published a book 'The Tarot of the Bohemians'. The pack has undergone many changes and still the legends and myths grow around it. It has become as closely associated with fortune telling as the crystal ball.

Ettielan version of the traditional Tarot card 'The Tower' or 'La Maison de Dieu'

Magic Tricks

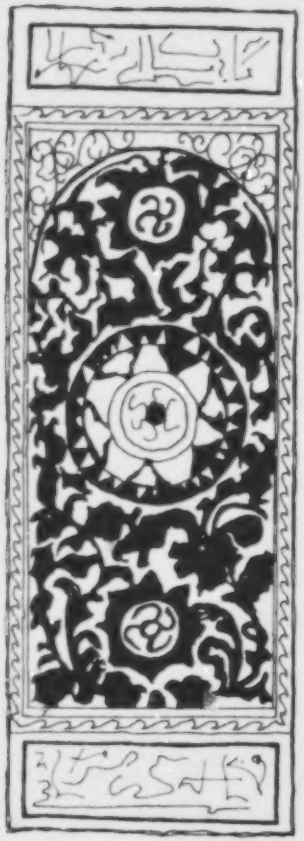
The use of cards in 'magic' shows to perform tricks was probably connected with their use in fortune telling. The increase in the popularity of gambling led to people secretly marking the cards so that they knew which were which by looking at their backs. Tricks like 'spot the lady' fool people into believing they can keep their eye on a queen when it is shuffled amongst two other cards. Today stage magicians often have a whole repertoire of card tricks amongst their acts.

230

231

The Playing Cards of Mamluk Egypt

Some of the most beautiful playing cards in existence were produced in Egypt by the Islamic artists of the Mamluk Kingdom. Although there is only one remaining pack of these cards in the Topkapi Sarayi Museum, Istanbul, Turkey, we know that many packs existed because they are mentioned in 15th century Spanish inventories.(6)



Mamluk Second Governor of Coins

232

Shown here are two of the five cards which were obviously taken from another pack of the same period to replace cards which must have been lost or damaged. In much the same way we might take a Queen of Hearts from an old pack to replace the one we have lost. This shows that the Mamluk pack was actually used, and was not made just to be looked at. The cards contain beautiful and intricate designs. The weaving of the swords on the suit of swords also appears on early Italian cards making it seem likely that their cards were inspired by the Islamic ones.

The Mamluk cards bear Arabic inscriptions which form a part of the cards' design. The inscription at the top of the Second Governor of Coins reads:
fa yā qalbī laka al-bushrā tahannā (Oh, my heart, here is a herald for you, be joyful and happy.)
The lower inscription reads:
thānī nā ib darāhim (Second Deputy of Coins, Dirhams)
The inscription on the 10 of Swords reads:
nādaytu min shawqī wa farhati khātirī (I called out of the longing and the joy of my heart.)(7)

Mamluk 10 of Swords

233

One of the most interesting things about the Mamluk playing cards is that the court cards bear no human figures. Instead, certain designs or inscriptions are used to show the status of court cards. The reason for this is that in the Islamic religion it is believed that it is blasphemous for a human to imitate the handiwork of God. One tradition says that making imitations of living things is like being in competition with God and the artist may be required on the Day of Judgement to breathe life into his work and, failing, may be condemned. However, the degree of hostility to image making varies from place to place and time to time.

The Koran is the scripture of the Islamic religion. It is not a long book, about 4/5 the length of the New Testament, and so scholars have studied it in depth to shed light upon their religion. Over the years they have uncovered many layers of meaning. In art this is reflected in the complexity of design. A close study of the Koran has fostered an intricate and detailed art.

There are three main motifs in Islamic art. One is calligraphy, relying on the ornamental qualities of Arabic writing, which enable words from the Koran to be included in the design. Some of the Mamluk playing cards bear decorative inscriptions of this kind. The second motif is the arabesque, based on plant and flower forms, a complicated wreathing of lines which derives from the acanthus in ancient Roman art. Thirdly, Islamic art uses geometry and straight lines.

In Islamic architecture, the minaret, the narrow tower which is the identifying feature of a mosque, can be said to symbolise attestation, or witness, that is when a Moslem repeats the Islamic creed he holds up the index finger of his right hand in the sign of witness.

The Islamic Religion

Islam is an Arabic word which means 'submission (to the will of God)'. There are about 600 million Moslems in the world, nearly all of whom live in the continents of Asia and Africa. From where it began in Arabia, Islam spread all along North Africa including Libya, Tunisia and Morocco and ultimately to Spain. At the same time it spread to the Sudan, Zanzibar and Tanganyika. To the North and East it covers Turkey, Iraq, Persia and Afghanistan; also Pakistan, Indonesia, Malaysia and parts of South East Asia. There are smaller numbers in other African and Asian countries and in Europe.

Like Christians and Jews, Moslems believe in the existence of one God, in Arabic, Allah. These three religions share many of the same stories and traditions, but Moslems believe that Mohammed was God's greatest prophet.

The first great piece of Islamic architecture, the Dome of the Rock, dates from 691 A.D. It was built in Jerusalem to show the supremacy of Islam over Judaism and Christianity. This building shows in its design and mosaics the influence of Byzantine art in Syria, and set a precedent for all Islamic design. During the third century after the start of Islam, there was great enthusiasm for the culture and the learning of its new territories. Islam learned from those it converted and developed an original and confident art.

236

The Dome of the Rock

237

The Mamluk Kingdom

The four suits of the Mamluk playing cards represent the functions of the four important officers at the court of a Mamluk Sultan: the cup bearer, the commander of the palace guard, the mint master and the polo master. Successive Mamluk Sultans were masters of Egypt from 1250 until its conquest by the Ottoman Turks in 1517. The name 'Mamluk' comes from the Arabic word for slave. Originally they were brought to Egypt from the Caucasus (part of which is now in the USSR) between the 10th and the 13th centuries as slaves, and were trained to be the Sultan's bodyguards. They proved such good fighters that they became the Egyptian cavalry corps, they eventually became a powerful military class and in 1250 the Mamluk leader Aibak seized control of the government. Over the next 250 years, successive Mamluk leaders ruled. There were continual plots to seize the throne and most of the sultans died violently after brief reigns.

During the Mamluk period, Egypt and Syria were trade-rich countries, which explains the quality and quantity of Mamluk art. Museum collections of Islamic art usually contain a great deal of Mamluk glass and metalwork. Successive Mamluk rulers, in their desire to be remembered, were willing to turn wealth into art. Architecture too was quite heavily patronised.

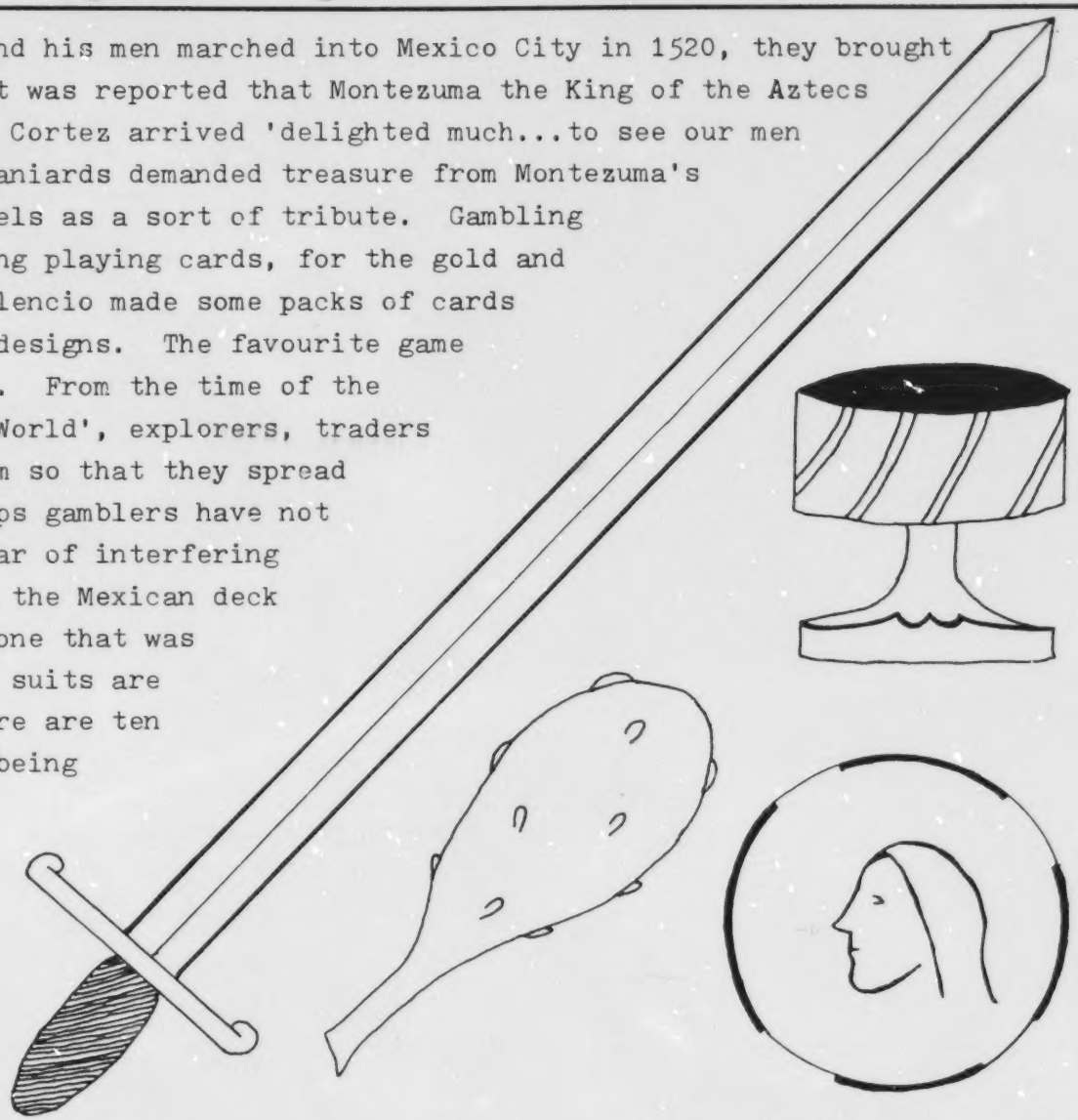
In 1517, the Turks under Selim I conquered Egypt, but for the next three centuries, Mamluks were permitted to serve in the government and the cavalry.

Mamluk tombs and Mosques outside Cairo

Playing Cards of the Apache Peoples of North America

When the Spaniard, Hernando Cortes and his men marched into Mexico City in 1520, they brought with them Spanish packs of cards, It was reported that Montezuma the King of the Aztecs who lived in Mexico at the time that Cortez arrived 'delighted much...to see our men play at Cardes and Dice'(8). The Spaniards demanded treasure from Montezuma's incredible warehouse of gold and jewels as a sort of tribute. Gambling took place amongst the Spaniards using playing cards, for the gold and riches. One Mexican called Pedro Valencio made some packs of cards from drum skins copying the Spanish designs. The favourite game of the Spanish soldiers was 'hombre'. From the time of the introduction of cards into the 'New World', explorers, traders and colonists carried cards with them so that they spread rapidly through the Americas. Perhaps gamblers have not wanted to change card designs for fear of interfering with their luck, because to this day the Mexican deck of cards is the same as the Spanish one that was introduced by Cortez' men. The four suits are cups, coins, swords and batons. There are ten cards in each suit, the court cards being King, Knight and Page.

Hundreds of years later, during the second half of the 19th century, the Apaches of North America made playing cards bearing the stamp of their own culture, even through the Spanish designs they copied.



The Spanish suit symbols: Swords, Batons, Cups and Coins.

Apaches playing Monte

References to games are common in the folklore of some Native American tribes. Usually the hero overcomes an enemy of the human race by cunning, skill or magic used in a series of contests. Children practise top spinning, mimic fights and other imitations of adult sports and activities. There are many games though that only belong to the adults, often played at fixed seasons of the year accompanying certain festivals. These games seem to be common to all North American tribes, varying more in the sorts of things used to make the implements than in the method of play.

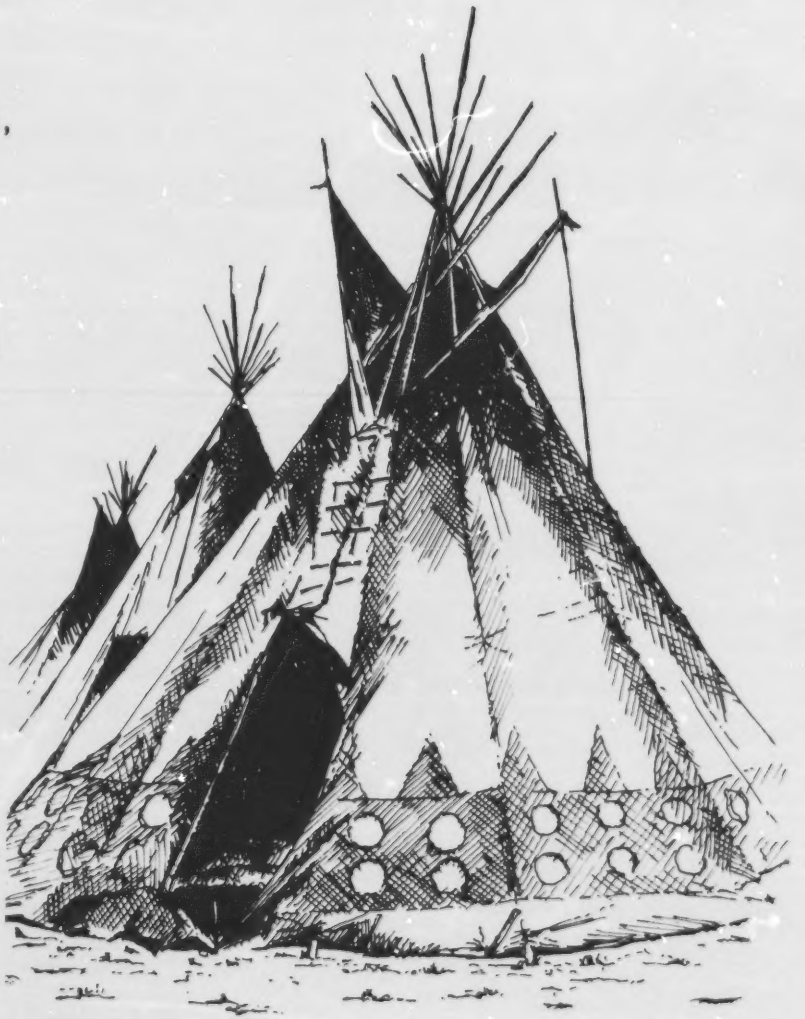
Stuart Culin[9] has identified two general types of play; games of chance - throwing things like dice, or guessing in which of two or more places something is hidden; games of dexterity - what we might call 'sports'; archery, racing games and ball games and shooting at moving targets. Games of skill and calculation seemed to be lacking until certain European games including playing cards were adopted. We cannot be sure exactly when the natives began to use cards, probably when they started to trade with the European settlers. At first they used printed cards which had been manufactured in the United States, Mexico or Europe with the traditional Spanish design just like those introduced into Mexico by Cortez. But between 1860 and the end of the century the Apache peoples of Arizona made and painted rawhide cards that imitated the Spanish designs maintaining the essential characteristics whilst expressing much about the Apache culture.

John Gregory Bourke, soldier and ethnologist, served with General George Crooke in the South West United States from 1869 to 1883. Much of the time was spent trying to come to a peaceful settlement with the Apaches who were raiding settlements in mobile bands.

He described an evening camp of the Apaches: '...a party of six Apache scouts was playing fiercely at the Mexican game of 'Monte', the cards employed being of native manufacture, of horsehide, covered with barbarous figures, and well worthy of a place in any museum'; at another time Bourke wrote 'He (the Apache) travels with fewer "impedimenta" than any other tribe of men in the world... but sometimes he allows himself the luxury or comfort of a pack of cards, imitated from those of the Mexicans, and made out of horse hide...'(10)

The Rawhide Method

Most Native American tribes believed in a Great Spirit who was the source of all things, including the buffalo, which was venerated in dances, ceremonies, legends, myths and the arts. Natural objects of all kinds commanded their respect. They believed that rocks, trees, sun and stars could help or hinder them, and they tried to make sure that the forces would be good to them. Hunting buffalo was a way of life for many Native American groups for hundreds of years. As the buffalo were pushed westward or killed off with the coming of the European settlers, native groups would sometimes travel hundreds of miles after them. Just as a woodland group living in the northern forests of North America learned to use the bark of the birch and other trees, the peoples of



A buffalo hide tipi

the North American Plains made all the objects they used in everyday life from the buffalo; food, clothes, possessions and luggage. They prepared most things like clothes, bags and playing cards from the buffalo's skin by the rawhide method. They became so good at the rawhide method of treating buffalo skin, that they came to consider it an easy task which was enjoyed. A buffalo just killed would be skinned and butchered on the spot, the meat wrapped in the hide and carried back to camp where all the flesh would be removed and the hide washed and staked out above the ground to dry. The dry hide would be marked out with the shapes of whatever was to be made from it and decorated. Then gradually the clothes and containers would be cut out of the hide.

Often it would be the women who did most of the rawhide crafting. The Dakota women believed that a 'Double Woman' helped them to prepare rawhide and to decorate it. The Arapho people had Whirlwind Woman or First Woman as legendary helper. The hide had to be removed from the buffalo with great care as holes or marks could ruin the look of the garment. The flesh would be removed from the inside of the hide before it dried using bone tools or stones with thin working edges. The hide was slit around the edge at six to ten inch intervals and pegged out to make it smooth and even when dry. Whilst pegged out (always hair side down) the hide would be cleaned by the throwing on of water and the scraping off again. If water was scarce, the buffalo's tongue would be kept in a bucket of water and used to wash and scrape. When dry, the designs were painted on with a bone brush which being porous held some paint. Rock paints were common, consisting of coloured pigment found between layers of rock carried there by a seepage of water through minerals. Iron oxides and cinnabar made yellows and reds and an iron ore mineral was used for black outlines. The painted hide would be sized with an antler or horn glue or a similar substance and after about two weeks drying time, the hair would be removed from the other side of the hide, usually by striking it slanting blows in the middle working outwards.

Thus the preparation of rawhide was central to the lives of the Plains people of North America; even the decoration of rawhide articles could tell them much about the skill and pride of a strange group. A rawhide gift could enhance the image of the giver by the beauty of its decoration.

Why did the Apaches make Cards ?

Why should the Apache make cards when he could obtain them from traders and settlers? Possibly because the most popular game of 'Monte' had its odds stacked in favour of the banker. The owner of a pack of cards could set himself up as banker and earn money and goods from the other players. Also because nomadic and independent bands of Apaches, antagonised by the flooding in of new settlers lived a precarious existence stealing and driving off Mexican cattle and selling them to the US army and raiding the army mules which they sold to the Mexicans. Tension became so high that there was at one point a bounty of 200 dollars on a scalp and an Apache could not afford to venture into a settlement to buy even a pack of cards.

How to play Monte

The game of 'Monte' is very simple to learn. The player bets against the banker on the suit of the card on the bottom of the deck which lies face down. Irregular cards could be used, and the cards made from hide were not always even and regular. The pack is shuffled and placed face down on the ground. The banker draws two cards off the top and two cards off the bottom of the stack, and places them face up in front of the

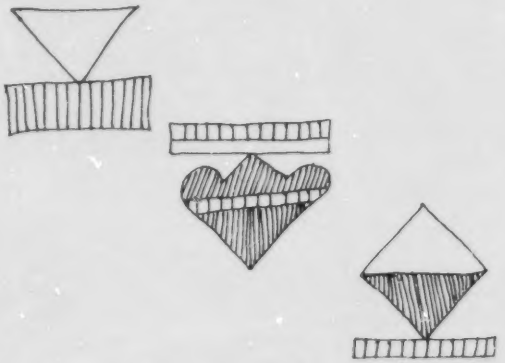
stack. The players now choose which exposed card they will bet upon to have the same suit as the card hidden at the bottom of the deck. When all bets are made, the banker then exposes the bottom card and pays and collects bets.

The Look of the Cards

The Spanish deck which the Apaches copied has a total of forty cards. The copies show the Apaches to be careful workmen. Some of the packs show a great deal of artistic expression, the artist has varied his designs instead of making straight copies. The man on horseback known as the 'caballero', was more familiar to the Apache culture pattern than the kings and knaves in their courtly robes. Some artists represented their figures in great detail showing us what a Native American warrior looked like; some packs show aspects of the advancing white man's civilisation, such as a saddle and a roll pack. The natives were increasingly influenced by people outside their own culture. From 1868 to 1886, both the United States and the Mexican governments had cavalry troops stationed in Apache territory in an effort to stop them from raiding settlements. According to various accounts of those times,

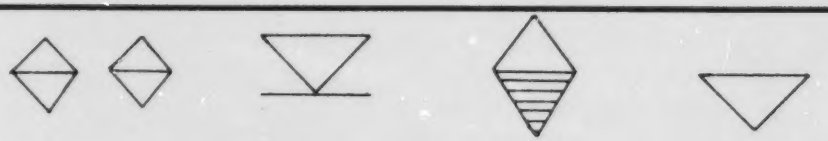
natives were seen in Mexico and in some cases the Apaches used Mexicans as their models when painting picture cards, we can assume that a caballero painted with curling moustaches and a Mexican hat on one playing card is indeed a Mexican. He appears to be holding a balloon, but we can be sure that it is in fact the cup symbol which the Apache artist did not recognise to be a cup when he was copying it. For that reason we see all sorts of Apache variations in cup design.

Apache Caballero of Cups
based on a Mexican horseman



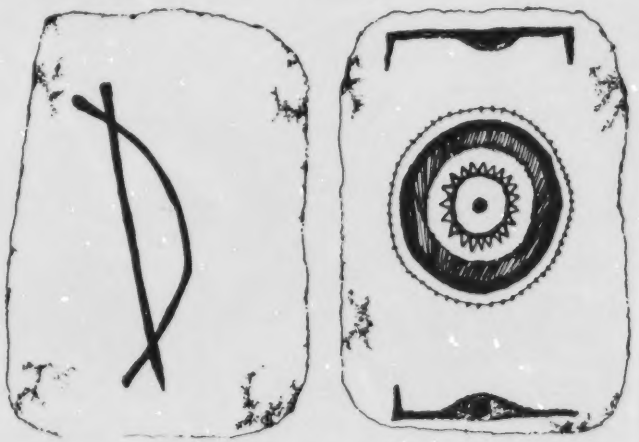
3 Apache cup designs

It is interesting to compare these 'cups' with the sort of shapes the Native Americans were familiar with when painting their own designs.



Feathers Leaf Tipi Pointed

The Apache cups bear as much resemblance to these familiar shapes as they do to the Spanish shapes from which they were copied. The suit of coins should have been easier for the Apache artist to understand. Many Apaches did a lively business stealing cattle and horses and selling them to army quartermasters. However, the aces of coins look more like suns than coins and on the numeral cards they appear just like dots. For the swords suit, a single line is often shown without any attempt to identify the hilt.



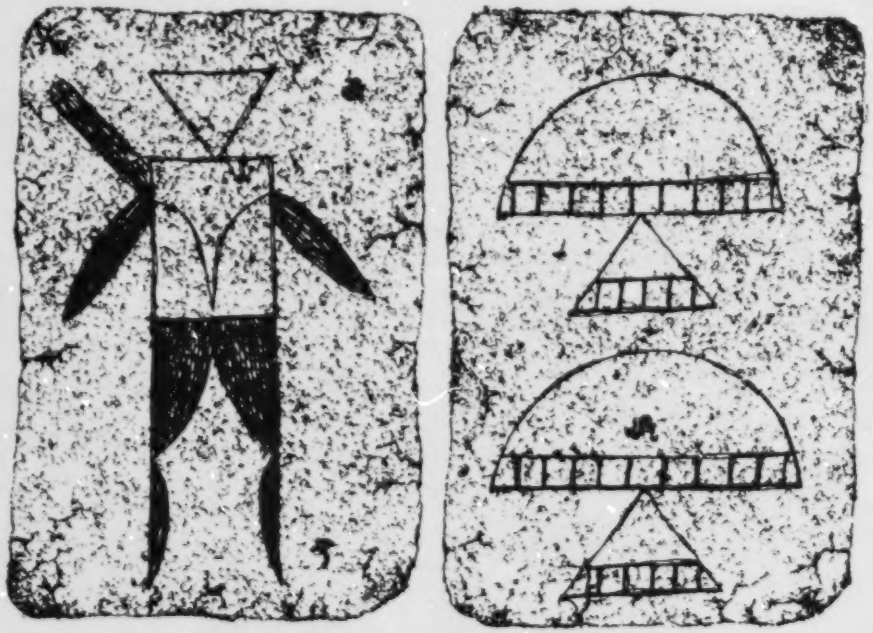
Apache Ace of Coins and Ace of Swords

Painting an entire pack of playing cards must have been time consuming for the Apache artist working on rawhide. Many artists went for a simpler less detailed representation of the Spanish pack. Sometimes the designs are clearly as basic and functional as possible. Some Apache packs have holes punched through them from where they were threaded onto a thong for portability, possibly to be carried around the owners neck.

The vegetable and commercial dyes commonly used on the cards were a part of every male Apache's wardrobe, he painted his body for war and also for some social occasions. The colours most commonly used on Apache playing cards are red, yellow, black, sometimes blue and sometimes green.

Other Native American Cards

There are one or two packs of hide playing cards known to have been made by the Sioux tribe. It is suspected that they were produced for tourists, the idea having been inspired by the Apache cards. There is at least one pack of cards in existence made from bark by woodlands people who made all their worldly goods from bark in the same way as the people of the Plains relied on the buffalo. The decorative possibilities of bark are quite good. When birchbark was stripped from the tree in early spring, a layer of brown on one side of the bark could be partly scraped away leaving a design in brown against a light background or the reverse. This would have allowed for designs even complicated enough to decorate playing cards.



Apache playing cards in the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford.

Indian Playing Cards

The second Moghul Emperor, Humayan, who ruled over India from 1530 to 1556, played with cards according to an account by his sister, Gulbadan. In November 1545 she wrote: 'There were many amusing games, full of fun, which were being played. Amongst them was this - twelve players had each twenty cards and twenty Shahrukhis (coins)... Each player gave the winner his twenty Shahrukhis to his own.'(11)

Today in India, people still play with traditionally designed and handpainted playing cards although the mass produced European variety have become the most widely used. Indian cards are attractive hard varnished discs, and a pack can contain as many as 144 cards.

People from all social classes play cards. Schools of card players assemble in public places, for example outside government offices in New Delhi, to play various gambling games and bridge. Naqsh has been one of the most popular gambling games amongst the Indians. Like pontoon, it involves trying to get a total number of 21 or 17 points in the value of the cards in your hand. In Delhi up until about 25 years ago there was a season between the two important Hindu festivals of Dusserah and Diwali when almost all the available free time was spent playing at Naqsh with Indian cards.

On the day of the Hindu festival Karwa-Chauth, the women of some areas of India observe a fast for the well being of their husbands. They play with cards to pass the time. On that day, lots of presents are sent by parents to their newly married daughters. A pack of cards used to be one of the gifts.

Moghul Ganjifa Playing Cards

One of the main types of Indian playing card is the Moghul Ganjifa pack, based on the hierarchy of the Moslem Imperial court. It is believed to have been devised by the Emperor Akbar the Great who lived between 1542 and 1605. This is according to an account by Abu'l Fazl his secretary and biographer in a chapter on games in a book about the Imperial court, written around 1565.(12) Akbar was one of the most powerful of the Moghul emperors of India. He extended his empire throughout Northern India and into the Deccan. He set up a military administration in which posts were open to Hindus and Moslems alike.

He encouraged scholars, poets, painters and musicians making his court a centre of culture. Many Indian governments before Akbar's had been weakened by the tendency of their armies to split into private forces and of the provincial governors to rule their own areas and pass on the rule to their offspring. Akbar made sure that he himself was responsible for appointing everyone. He paid his officers by giving them charge of lands from where they had to collect money from the peasants. He set up a centralised finance system and organised newswriters to report to him all the important events of his land. Under his rule the peasants still remained poor whilst the officials enjoyed wealth, luxuries and the brilliance of his court.

His painters incorporated some of the techniques of European artists, especially realism and perspective, into their Moghul style. This style of art can still be seen reflected in the Moghul playing cards.

The eight suits of the Moghul Ganjifa pack represent the structure of court life: the treasury; the chancellery; the stores; the royal music; the silver mint; the swords or armoury; the crown and royal insignia; and the royal household. The court cards represent the King and Prime Minister. They spread rapidly across India being carried by the spread of Moghul culture.

Moghul Ganjifa playing card, Vizier of Surkh, originally the suit of coins, now usually shows a tiger.

The back of an Indian playing card.

In the Deccan, there were many variations of cards quickly invented, probably because in that area the northern and southern and the Hindu and Moslem cultures met. It was probably here that playing cards developed along Hindu lines, and consequently became even more popular.

256

257

Hindu Playing Cards

In India there are over 300,000,000 people who follow the Hindu religion. It is an old religion, a mixture of several different faiths, containing many different ideas. The earliest sacred books of the Hindus are called Vedas. They are a collection of hymns and poems which set out the religious ideas of the Arya (a people who invaded India from the north west in about 1500 BC). The Arya also began to worship some of the gods of the people they had conquered and the type of Hinduism taught today began to emerge.

The Hindu religion teaches that people can find God in three ways: by dedicating their work to Him, by prayer and love and by living alone in prayer and contemplation using the practise of yoga. The Hindus believe that until a person finds God, his soul keeps on being born again and again. If the person has behaved well in his life he will be born next into a higher caste. A caste is a group of people who have their own particular position in society and a Hindu will keep the caste he has been born into all his life. Often certain occupations go with certain castes. When a man has found God his soul is believed to be merged in God and when he dies it will not be born again.

Ordinary people are not expected to follow the difficult path of worshipping God through contemplation. As God shows himself in many ways it is possible for them to find easier ways of worshipping him. He shows aspects of himself through lesser gods and it is these the ordinary people worship. Vishnu is looked upon as the god who preserves life, and he is reborn on earth from time to time to fight evil and protect mankind. The Dasavatara playing cards tell the story of Vishnu as he was reborn on earth ten times in ten different forms. Each of the ten Dasavatara suits show one of the ten incarnations. The story of Vishnu is told in a famous poem known to all Hindus. It relates how he appeared as an enormous fish, a turtle, a man-lion and in one of his most celebrated incarnations as Rama whose romantic story is told separately in the Ramayana. Ramayana playing cards depict scenes from the story of Rama; his banishment from his father's kingdom; his rescue of his wife Sita from the many headed demon Ravana; and finally after many adventures his triumphant return to take up his rightful crown.

Dasavatara playing cards. Suit signs showing two of the incarnations of Vishnu, a turtle and fish, the Pitt Rivers Musuem, Oxford.

Chitrakars

Chitrakars are highly skilled men, keeping up old craft traditions in what today is a machine orientated world. Apart from cards, they produce paintings, pottery, lacquered furniture, toys, boxes, ornaments and other lacqvered goods. In Bengal they sometimes belong to the professional castes. There is a legend in Bengal about a high caste painter painting an image of Shiva, the destroyer god, who appeared before him. In his astonishment, the painter put his brush in his mouth; later he carried on painting. Shiva then reappeared and said 'You are painting me with an unclean brush. You shall be unclean forever, but paint gloriously.'(13)

The Portuguese came to India in the 16th century, French and English cards were refashioned in the same way. 19th century India became flooded with imported cards, Belgian card makers even producing cards with Indian figures on them. Today, India prints her own international style cards, though there are a few local cardmakers still making traditional handcrafted packs.

A Chitrakar painting a playing card

The Making of the Cards

The circular shape of the Indian cards was probably developed from the shape of circular game pieces like chess. They usually have their backs painted red, orange or brown with (sometimes) a rim line or small central flower. Of course the back design must be regular to avoid tell-tale signs.

Cards of ivory, tortoishell, mother-of-pearl or inlaid or enamelled precious metals were made. Ivory cards were painted carved or engraved. In Jaipur, some cards were made of engraved brass discs, finely worked wooden tablets were also used. The more common cards were made from waste paper or fabrics, starched and burnished. Things like old store lists and pages from exercise books have all been found in the fabric of playing cards. To make cards; five or six layers of paper are glued together, primed with lime, dried, burnished, cut, painted and lacquered. The lacquer is made from natural resins, giving stiffness, smoothness and protection, and an attractive, glossy surface. Alternatively, cotton waste rags are soaked in tamarind mash, and burnished with a stone. Ground colours are applied and the craftsman paints in the figures with animal hair brushes. The colours are compounded with seashells and mixed with glue.

The whole family share the labour. Preparation is often done by the women. Pip cards are painted by the junior artists and figure cards by the seniors. Paler colours are applied first finishing with a swift elegant black outline. There is a general conformity to traditional designs but the artists evolve a personal style. Painting the figure cards is sometimes done using a paper pattern called a 'pounce'.

A paper pounce

Ramayana Playing Card - Rama breaks the bow of Siva the Destroyer god, thus winning the hand of Sita.

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Dolls

ETHNOGRAPHIC RESOURCES
FOR ART EDUCATION

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CONTENTS

Introduction..... 1

The Hopi People of North America..... 2

Folk Dolls of India..... 10

Japanese Dolls..... 13

References..... 20

Bibliography..... 21

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank the following for their help in the compilation of this resource book:

Mary Graham, Librarian, Heard Museum, Arizona, USA.

Alice Schlegel, Associate Professor of Anthropology, University of Arizona.

Mary Jane Lenz, Assistant Curator, Museum of American Indian, New York.

Rain Parrish, Curator of Wheelwright Museum, New Mexico.
All the above provided initial resource material.

Betty Tyers, Victoria and Albert Museum.

Caroline Goodfellow, Bethnal Green Museum.

D.A.Swallow, University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge.

Jan Knappert, School of Oriental and African Studies, London.

Dr. Schuyler Jones, Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford.

The staff at the Japanese Embassy, London.

The staff at the High Commission of India.

Mrs. N.Somers, for reading and checking information in the Japanese section.

Peter Gibbs, Museum of Mankind, London, for his invaluable help regarding the Hopi people of North America, and for reading through this section.

Ranjit Sondhi, Asian Resource Centre, Birmingham, for reading through the text on Indian dolls.

The staff of Birmingham Polytechnic Libraries, Birmingham Public Library, and the library of the Museum of Mankind.

The I.L.E.A. materials service.

Philip Rawson, Dean of Art and Design, Goldsmiths College, University of London for a variety of suggestions.

INTRODUCTION

Representations of the human form have been made by people of many different cultures all over the world, for hundreds, even thousands of years. In the West, we know these 'little people' as 'dolls', and they are used chiefly as children's playthings. But in other parts of the world, where a doll might be anything from a roughly shaped piece of clay to a fine piece of embroidered artwork, dolls have other functions, often linked to religious and ceremonial tradition.

A doll always mirrors something of the society it comes from, either in its appearance or its traditional uses. But despite the huge variety of dolls, there is a surprising sameness in look and function from place to place.

This section hopes to show, through the culture and traditions of three peoples, some of the different roles that dolls perform around the world.

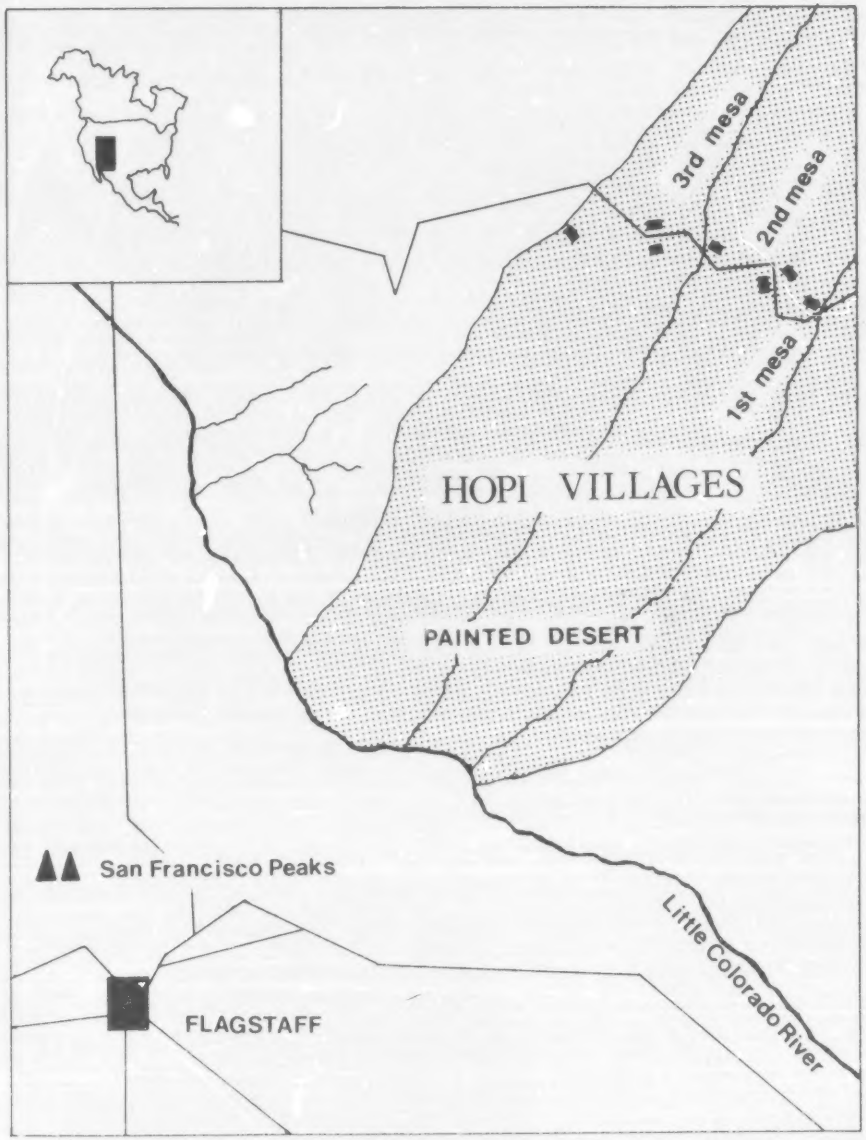
The Hopi People of North America

The Hopi live in northern Arizona on the Colorado Plateau overlooking the Painted Desert and the Valley of The Little Colorado River. The region is one of rocky mesas and sandy valleys with villages occupying the high ground. These people have had many names, but 'Hopi' - 'The Good People' - is the correct term.

The Spirit Tradition

The Hopi are deeply concerned with the preservation of their culture and religion, but much of their history has been lost as they have no written language. Folklore and customs have been passed orally from generation to generation, both in the home and at religious meetings:-

> "...the driving force of the Hopi religion is the urgent need for water in any form, as rain for farming, for drinking water in the springs, or snow to replenish the land. Water is forever the primary motivation. To survive in this waterless land the Hopi developed a complex religion to secure supernatural assistance in fulfilling their needs." (1)



The Hopi believed that at one time they had lived in an underworld, but were very unhappy with this existence and prayed for help. Spirits, in the form of birds and animals, helped the Hopi to enter into this world through a hole in the sky. The ceremonies and festivals that take place today re-enact this transition.

The Symbolic Tradition

Most events of Hopi life are sacred and loaded with symbolic meaning. Places, colours and images have special implications which enrich their lives and environment.

The symbolic value of colour is inherent in one of the main crops of the community. In Arizona sweetcorn grows in a variety of colours, a phenomenon unknown in Europe. For the Hopi these colours traditionally represent those directions within their world from which the sun shines, or the wind blows or the snow comes. Yellow represents the north, blue-green the west, red the south, white the east and black the underworld.

The brightly coloured feathers of three birds, the red shafted flicker, the yellow shafted flicker and the red tailed hawk, have figured significantly on Hopi headresses and prayer sticks.

The Hopi thank everything in nature that contributes to their existence. For example, the tortoise-shell rattles worn on their legs represent their thanks to the ponds and springs which supply essential water.

The eagle has an important symbolic value. Prior to festivities an eagle is caught and introduced to the inhabitants of a village. It remains tethered to a roof-top from where it can observe the village and make sure everyone is behaving as they should. As the closing ceremony arrives the eagle is given presents after which it is sacrificed. It is believed that its spirit will fly to the San Francisco Mountain Peaks where the Kachina Spirits live from August to December. Some of the eagle's feathers are ceremonially buried, others are used to decorate prayer-sticks and head-dresses. The prayer-sticks will be deposited in various sacred places throughout the year. They symbolise Hopi prayers for rain, crops and well-being. The feathers represent the flight of the prayers to the spirits.

Other symbolic items are the large terraced wooden tablitas as seen on the Hemis Kachina or the Butterfly Dancer. They are decorated with representations of clouds, lightning, rain, seeds and corn in the belief that the portrayal will transmit to the spirits the need for these things.

Kachina Spirits

The Hopi believe that these spirits visit their villages between the 'Bean Dance' at the end of December and the 'Home Dance' at the end of July. It is not easy to communicate with such insubstantial beings and so they are given shape, personality and bodily form by impersonation. Hopi men use paint, symbols, actions and costumes to achieve this representation.

The Kachina Spirit impersonated by the masked dancer acts as an intermediary between the Hopi people and the gods. Their main function is to dance, pray and sing in order to bring rain and sun to make the crops grow and to give gifts to children. However, not all Kachinas are completely benevolent. For example, the 'Ogres' are there to ensure discipline and to threaten punishment for any transgressions.

Hemis Kachina

Ogre

Kachina Dancers

The clans will refurbish their masks and costumes for the Kachina season which begins late in December with the ritual opening of the Kivas. These are underground ceremonial rooms which are believed to be entrances to the spirit- or underworld.

The 'Bean Dance', in which over two hundred dancers may participate, opens the season. Beans which have been force-sprouted in heated Kivas are distributed to the villagers by the dancers. This is a celebratory dance because it is believed that the spirits have assisted the growth of these seeds, and this gives the villagers hope for a good harvest.

The Bean Dance has two further functions, it announces the return of the Kachina Spirits to the village, and it initiates children into the Kachina system of religious ceremony.

While the weather remains too cold to hold the dances outside they take place in the Kivas. With spring the Kachina Dancers perform outside in the plaza. These dances are dedicated to the growth of corn crops and the increase of wild and domestic plants and animals.

Kachin Mana

Left Handed Kachina

Every Kachina - dancer, spirit or doll - has a name which represents an important part of the Hopi environment. Some are named after animals or birds - 'Cow' and 'Owl', others describe specific features - the 'Left Handed Kachina', or calls - 'Ho-ote', and some names describe an active principle such as rain-making - 'Kachin Mana '.

> "This multitude of spirits range from Star Kachina to Ash Kachina. They represent game, domestic plants and animals, wild foods, birds, insects. Even death itself is given Kachina form. The creative force of the sun and abstract powers inherent in neighbouring tribes are visualised as Kachinas." (2).

There are said to be between two hundred and fifty and three hundred and fifty Kachina Spirits, but not all would be impersonated at the same time (3). Impersonation of the Kachina Spirits belongs to particular families. The Hopi family system is different to that of Europe. Within a family unit a father disciplines his sister's children, while his own children are governed by his wife's brother. These 'clans' retain the Knowledge of certain rites and objects that were brought from the underworld by their forefathers.

Owl Kachina

Dances last from dawn til dusk and follow a traditional pattern, although new songs are composed each year. The dance leader begins by shaking his rattle for a rhythm, gradually the others will join in. Turtle-shell rattles, fastened to their knees, help to keep the tempo. The basic dance step is to raise the foot and stamp the ground in time to the music. The dancing and singing is accompanied by symbolic gestures of the arms and head.

The Kachina season ends as the crop growing season begins to take up more of the Hopi people's time. A final ceremony called the 'Home Dance' is held in mid-summer when the early corn is mature. The ceremony is a thanksgiving rite for another season of growth. During the dance the Kachinas bring gifts attached to corn stalks and distribute them amongst the children. The ceremony ends with the villagers walking down the line of Dancers throwing corn meal as a symbolic offering to them. After this the Dancers disappear below ground through the roofs of the Kivas, symbolically re-entering the spirit world, while the Kachina Spirits they have represented return to their home on the mountain peaks.

Authentic Kachina Dolls, or tihus, are miniature representations of the masked dancers and are usually made by men.

Kachina Dolls, as seen in Bethnal Green Museum, London.

The doll is carved from the roots of the cotton-wood tree. After a piece of wood has been selected and sawn to the required length a hatchet or butcher's knife is used to cut the rough shape of the doll. A smaller, finer knife creates a smoother, detailed finish. Today, with modern tools and materials such as wood rasps and sand-paper, this task is made easier.

When the carving is finished a white base is applied to the doll. The materials used for painting have changed over the years. Traditionally kaolin, a local clay, was used for the base. Other colours were also obtained from natural sources: oxides of iron, copper ores, coloured clays and vegetable dyes. These have gradually been replaced by modern acrylic paints which provide more brilliant and longer lasting colours.

When the doll has been painted, other items are added for decoration. Feathers or hair may be used on the headpiece and prayer stick. Leather or woven cloth for the clothing and arm, leg and foot decorations. Snouts horns and ears are added at this point.

The dolls are presented at the Bean Dance and Home Dance. They are usually tied to a cradle board like a baby, and are often treated as such by little girls who are given their first tihus at the ceremony which follows nearest to their birth. Tihus are presented by a Dancer known as Kokoleum, who also gives bull-roarers, rattles and bows and arrows to the boys. Kokoleum is regarded by some historians as the Hopi equivalent of the Christian Father Christmas.

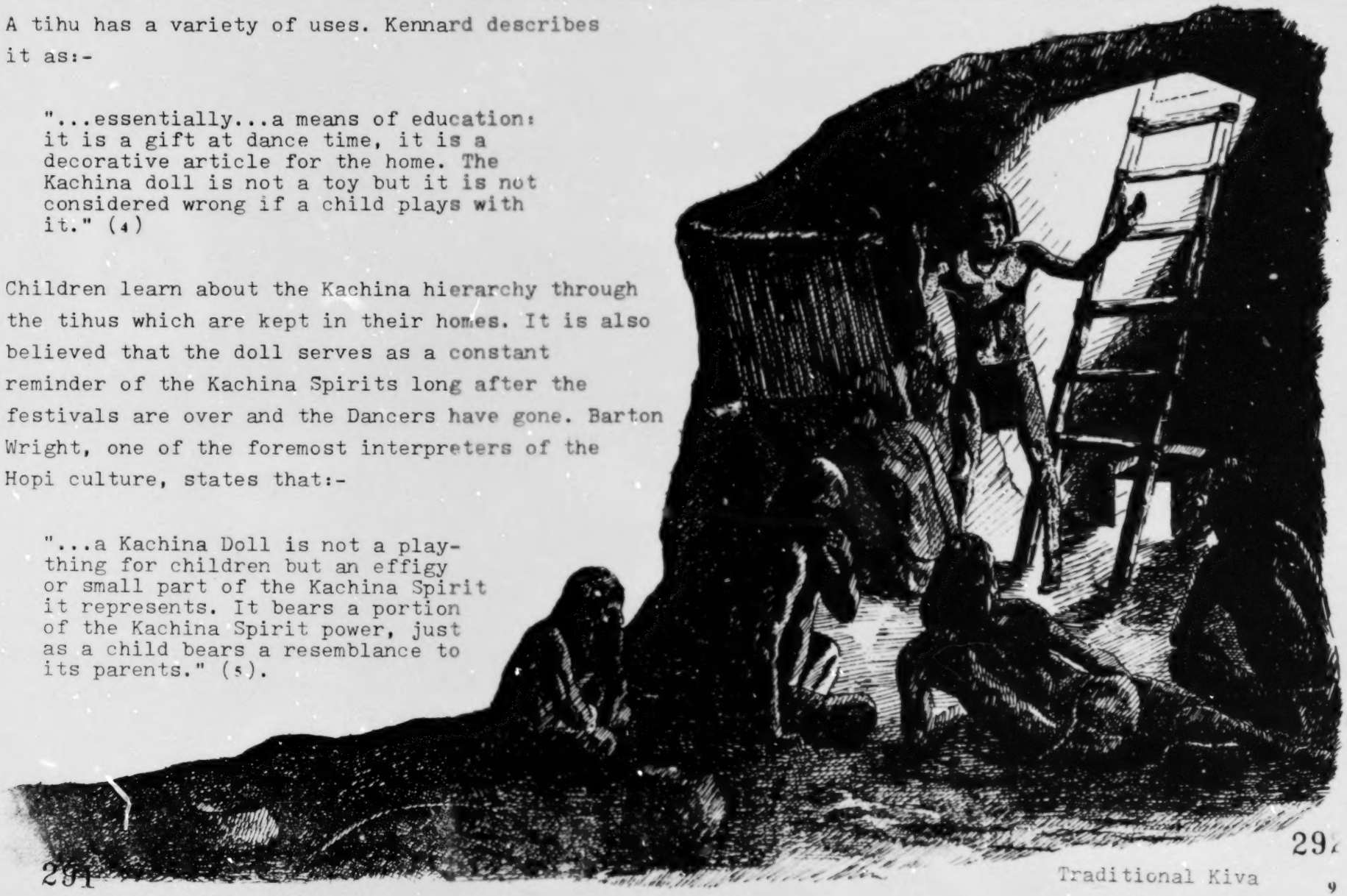
Kokoleum Dancer

A tihu has a variety of uses. Kennard describes it as:-

> "...essentially...a means of education: it is a gift at dance time, it is a decorative article for the home. The Kachina doll is not a toy but it is not considered wrong if a child plays with it." (4)

Children learn about the Kachina hierarchy through the tihus which are kept in their homes. It is also believed that the doll serves as a constant reminder of the Kachina Spirits long after the festivals are over and the Dancers have gone. Barton Wright, one of the foremost interpreters of the Hopi culture, states that:-

> "...a Kachina Doll is not a plaything for children but an effigy or small part of the Kachina Spirit it represents. It bears a portion of the Kachina Spirit power, just as a child bears a resemblance to its parents." (5).

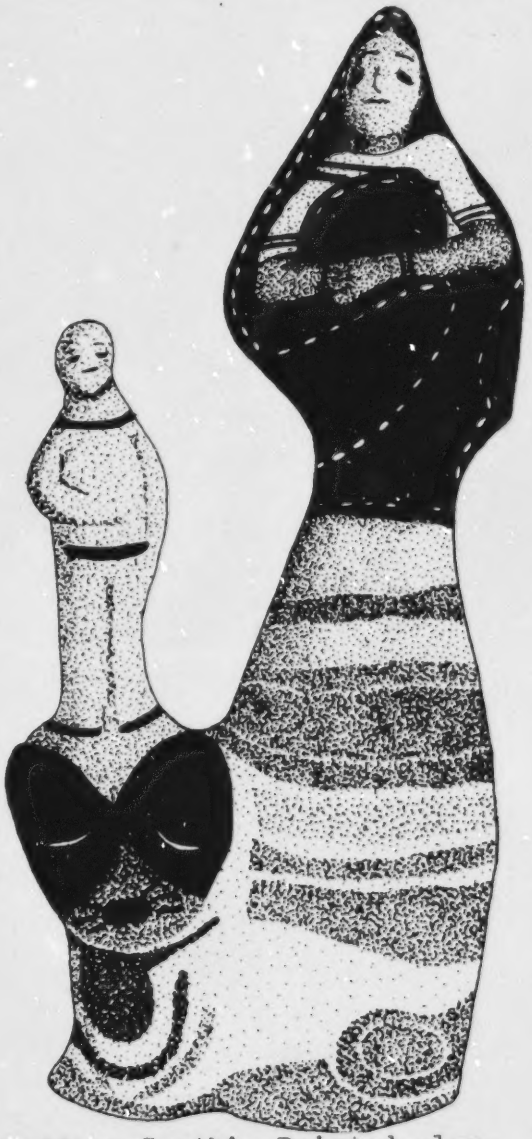


Traditional Kiva

Folk Dolls of India

Although India consists of many districts and villages each with their own traditions, its dolls have almost universally been associated with religious celebrations and festivals. The dolls have a charming and colourful simplicity. There is an intimate link between play and ritual in Indian life and very few dolls are made purely for amusement. Nearly all indicate some aspect of Indian history. Poor children whose parents cannot afford books are able to learn the traditions and folklore of their country through playing with dolls. The function of a doll is established by its use and association and is not determined by a toy-maker. For example, a woman makes an image of Sasthi, a household goddess, whilst explaining the Vrata story to the children around her. This enriches the general knowledge of the children, and when they receive the doll to play with they recall the story of Sasthi. The toy to them is not just a plaything but a symbol of something more significant.

Dolls are important features of the ten-day festival of Dusserah. Those households which observe the ritual set up a special altar for daily worship upon which a selection of dolls and toys are placed. The collection of dolls begins with marriage when a bride receives dolls from her parents and father-in-law. She will add to the collection each year and display her dolls at each festival of Dusserah. In some villages in the north and west of India small figurines of Durga, a household goddess, are made out of cow-dung. They are highly decorated and hang on the walls of houses. During the festival offerings are made and barley seeds are sown, after eight or nine days the dolls are thrown into a river or pond. (6).



Goddess Sasthi. Painted clay.
Kalighat (Calcutta), West Bengal.

Doll Making

At one time childrens dolls were made of leaves, because these were perishable no examples remain. Other materials used in the making of dolls are cane, cloth, pith, bronze, clay and wood. Some are used more readily than others. Clay is the most popular substance and is easy to manipulate. Different materials present their own problems of form. For this reason people do not attempt to make exact representations of objects. Rather they aim for simplification and to create features that emphasise rhythm and expression.

The Mother Doll

The most important Indian doll is the Mother with child, a symbol of fertility. As in other ancient civilizations female representations predominate in a variety of forms:-

> "The mother, secular or godly, is treated expressionistically, moulded by hand, rounded, pressed down, pinched up, to shape the feathers, the application of the eyes, ears, hair and different limbs. The form tends to take geometrical, cylindrical and other conical shapes." (8)

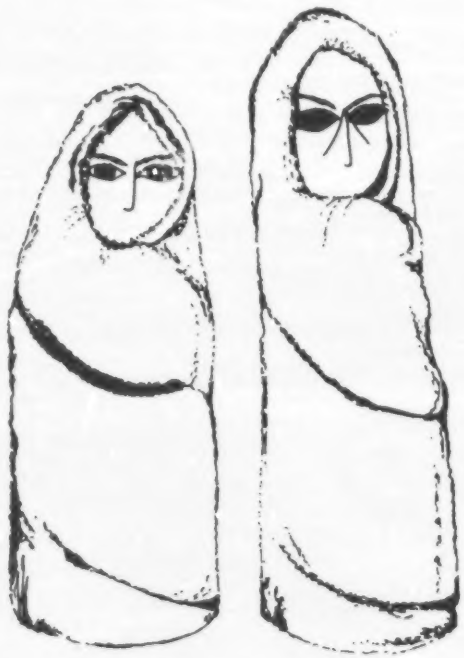
The dolls are made in this way so that they stand more securely.

Mother and Child dolls.

Mummy Doll

297

Two dolls from Bombay are similar in outline to an Egyptian mummy, and it is thought that they originated in Egypt. They are colourfully painted in red, yellow, black and blue. The facial features are given close attention.



Mummy dolls from Bombay.

Clay dolls are made by women and children, the men use only wood, pith and bronze. The characteristics of hand made dolls are weight and vigour. Some forms are abstract with brittle lines and decoration indicating pent-up energy and dynamic movement. Colour is attractively used on clay dolls:-

> "Colour is the principle means by which an enchanting world of make-believe for children is created." (7)

The main colours are lamp black, ochre, indigo, green and orange. These are applied to a white-coated ground prepared from chalk. To make the colours they are either mixed with the gum of the bel fruit or with tamarind seed paste.

Sunbaked clay doll coated with lacquer, from the Faridpur district of Bombay.

298

Japanese Dolls

The folk dolls of Japan reflect many of the local customs, legends and history. Many of them can be traced to the very roots of the national culture - particularly those connected with religion. In this section four Japanese dolls will be discussed - Tilting dolls, Floating dolls, the Boys and Girls Festival dolls and Kokeshi dolls.

Tilting Dolls

Tilting dolls commemorate the endurance and will-power of Daruma, the semi-mystical founder of the Zen sect. (9). Their shape originates in the story that Daruma spent nine years seated in meditation, wrapped in a blanket, during which time he lost the use of his legs. Tilting dolls are usually made of papier mache or wood and have modelled clay faces. They are weighted so that they will always return to a vertical position if knocked down. There are a variety of tilting dolls from different areas of the country.

> "That of the Kansai district is of particular interest as it is always made with blank eyes. When the doll owner wants to make an important wish, he or she will paint in one pupil, when the wish is granted the second eye's pupil will be painted in." (10).

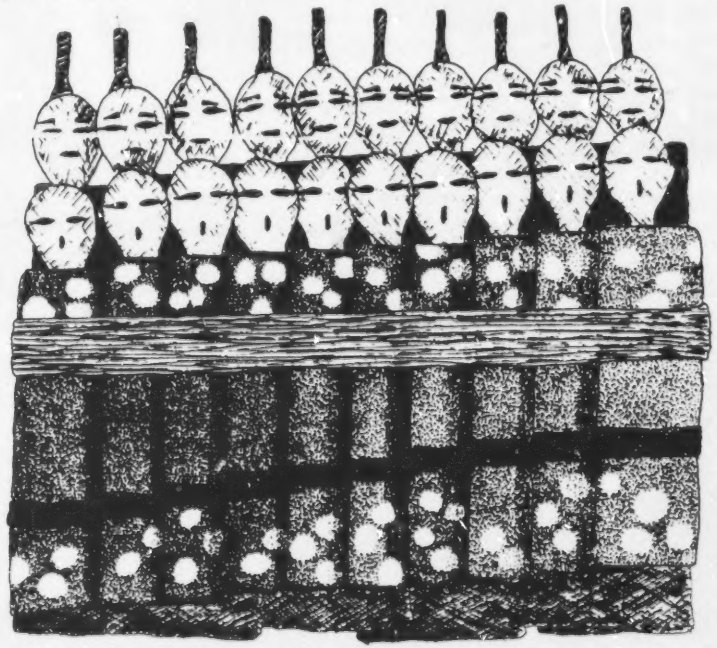
In the past Tilting dolls were sold at religious shrines. It was believed that contact with one of these dolls would rid a person of ill-fortune. For centuries a traditional New Year's Day custom has been to throw Tilting dolls into the houses of friends as a sign of friendship and a wish for good luck.

Tilting dolls are of such a nature that they can be classed both as dolls and as objects of worship. (11).

Tilting Dolls

Floating Dolls

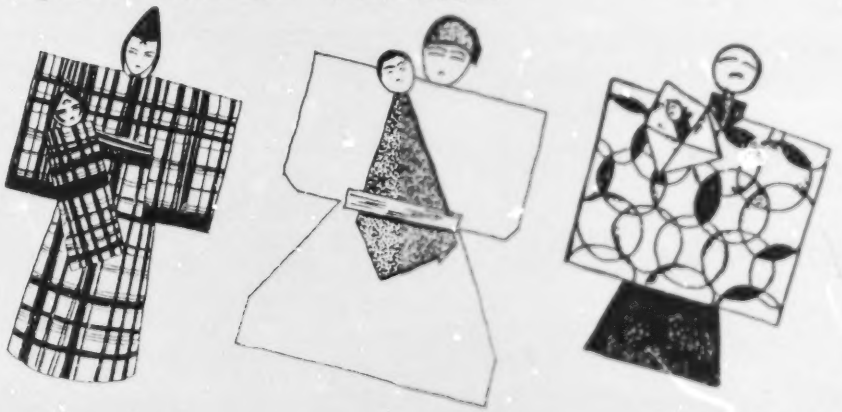
During the Heian period (794 - 1185) it was customary to charm away evil spirits, illness and other misfortunes with dolls made of paper or grass. This became an annual event on days known as 'sekku'. For generations January 1st, March 3rd, May 5th, July 7th and September 9th have been observed as annual feast days. It was customary on March 3rd to throw paper dolls into the river after the purification ceremony. In some areas the dolls were placed in a miniature boat and floated downstream. This custom symbolised the washing away of misfortunes.



301

Some Floating dolls were sold only in two sets of ten which were bound together with bamboo. They were made of paper and had clay heads. Their bodies were red, a symbolic colour of happiness, decorated with white spots, and their sashes and hats were of gold paper. These dolls were displayed on March 3rd after which a set from the previous year and a new set would float downstream on a miniature raft laden with food. This symbolised the carrying away of evil spirits. The remaining set served as a lucky charm against illness and disasters during the coming year.

Gradually the customs surrounding talisman dolls changed. Rather than throwing the dolls away, people began to keep them as ornaments. More elaborate dolls were made which reflected Japanese life and traditions.



302

Kokeshi Dolls

Probably the most famous folk doll in Japan is the Kokeshi doll which exists in a variety of different shapes and sizes. There is speculation about their origin, but it is believed that they are the only ones invented purely for the amusement of children. They are basically skittle shaped and limbless as they are made on a lathe. Some are very smoothly finished, others have a rough finish and on some the bark of the tree is still attached.

The dolls have a long slender body and a rounded head. The head is made separately and attached by means of a knob of wood which slots into a hole in the body. This is done when the body is fresh off the lathe and still hot. When the wood cools it contracts, the hole becomes smaller and the head is firmly attached.

In shape the Kokeshi doll is similar to a totem and is very attractive It has bands of primary colours around its base upon which flowers may be painted. The style of decoration varies due to the large number of craftsmen. Before mass-production the dolls were usually made in connection with local industries and pastimes, often by joiners and carpenters wishing to earn a little more money in their spare time.

The popularity of these dolls may lie in the simplicity of shape and colouring, both of which appeal to Japanese taste. Also, each doll is slightly different due to the idiosyncratic nature of lathe work. This characteristic makes the dolls attractive to collectors as well as to children.

Kokeshi Dolls

Doll Festivals

The ancient Japanese believed that during the celebrations of March 3rd and May 5th evil spirits could be driven out of their bodies. This custom was a mixture of Chinese influence and the Japanese notion of purification. The customs and beliefs gradually changed over the years, but the dates were kept as festivals. In 1948 May 5th was made a national holiday known as Children's Day and eventually became the date of the Boys' Festival. March 3rd became the Girls' Festival.

The Girls Festival

According to Tokubei Yamada:-

> "...in ancient Japan girls in families of the nobility used to play with dolls called 'hina', representing the aristocratic class of society." (12).

In the fifteenth century it was customary to give presents of dolls, dolls houses, furniture and anything else connected with dolls. These were then displayed at the Doll Festivals.

The dolls are passed from mother to eldest daughter when, as a bride, she goes to her new home. Younger daughters usually receive sets of dolls which have been collected for them by relatives at the first festival after their birth.

In the middle-ages March 3rd was celebrated by drinking a rice wine, shirozake, and eating a rice cake, mochi. At first this custom was not connected with the Doll celebration, but the two activities did eventually relate to each other. It became traditional to offer shirozake and mochi to the dolls on festival day.

Lady in-waiting

Several weeks of preparation precedes the festival. A stand covered with red cloth is set up in an alcove or small room. Traditionally the stands have either five or seven tiers depending upon whether the family have military or noble connections.

A typical display would look something like this. The Emperor and Empress backed by a folding screen decorated with gold leaf and flanked by hand lamps, would be on the top tier. Three ladies-in-waiting on the second tier and a set of five musicians on the third. The fourth and lower tiers would contain attendants, servants and food and drink for the Emperor and Empress. The fourth tier may also contain miniature cherry and orange trees. Thus the doll stand portrays a scene from ancient court life.

Emperor and Empress

In the middle-ages lanterns were lit and placed so that the light would fall on the dolls. Adults would gather round to tell stories of their ancestors. The children would listen, and in their turn pass on the stories to the next generation. But:-

> "Today both costume and outfit are things of the past. Perhaps there are quite a few parents of today who are unable to give a satisfactory explanation of the things which they help their daughters prepare for the display on March 3rd. Things have changed. People no longer live and think in the same way as did their forefathers." (13).

The Boys Festival of May 5th is also called 'Shobu' or Iris. In the past the iris was believed to be a charm against misfortune. In a custom which is still practised boys dress up as soldiers. They wear a headband and used to brandish an iris leaf as a sword. In later years the leaves were replaced by wooden swords. Another practice among the nobility was to make a gift of a toy helmet adorned with iris leaves. As time went by these customs altered slightly and eventually became an annual event as a gala day for boys which was celebrated by all families who had young boys.

During the Edo period it was customary for Samurai warriors to set up a palisade inside which they would display banners, streamers, helmets, swords and halberds. Eventually these displays had to be restricted by law because they were so elaborate and expensive. Miniature indoor displays of the weapons became prevalent with only the streamers left flying outside as a memory of the former magnificence of the festivities. People began to add dolls to the displays of Samurai weapons and regalia as dramatic representations of historical or legendary figures who were noted for their military prowess. For example, the 'Chaser of Devils'.

309

Iris

Chaser of Devils

310

The exhibition stand is covered with red cloth and arranged in either two or three tiers, there are two possible arrangements. One is to place the military objects in the centre of the stand with the dolls on either side. The other is to have the dolls in the centre surrounded by the regalia. Miniature folding fans, swords and horses may also be included. The fan represents the type used by a general, while the drum and horse serve as reminders of the battlefield. Banners, carp streamers and swords serve as a background behind which will be a curtain or a screen like those used in a battle camp. Food and wine will be placed in front of the stand.

It is quite probable that these traditional festivals have died out in parts of Japan, but even in these areas warriors are still remembered as part of their history.

311 Samurai sword

Samurai helmet 312

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